DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 144 704 PS 009 528

AUTHOR Heron, Alastair
TITLE Early Childhood Care and Education: Objectives and Issues.
INSTITUTION Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Paris (France). Centre for Educational Research and Innovation.
PUB DATE 77
NOTE 62p.
AVAILABLE FROM OECD Publications Center, Suite 1207, 1750 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006 ($4.00)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 Plus Postage. HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Ancillary Services; *Child Care; Day Care Services; *Early Childhood Education; Educational Objectives; *Foreign Countries; *Government Role; Infancy; *International Organizations; Needs Assessment; Parent Role; *Policy Formation
IDENTIFIERS *Center for Educational Research and Innovation; Organisation for Economic Cooperation Development

ABSTRACT

This report describes an international study of objectives and issues in early childhood care and education (ECCE). The study was carried out by the Center for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI), an organization created by the Council of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development to study educational issues of concern to its 24 member countries. The aim of this study was to identify common problems of the member countries and to exchange ideas on possible solutions. The report includes a brief review of current issues in ECCE: the impact of recent research, supply and demand for services, administrative models and current objectives. A detailed study of ECCE services in seven member countries constitutes the main body of the report. Comparisons of services are organized under six headings: structure, standards, supply and demand, parent participation and education, coordination of ancillary services, and general policies. The final section of the report includes an extrapolation and summary of key issues (care versus education and quality versus quantity, for example) and subsequent options for translating objectives and issues into specific policies. The report concludes that ECCE objectives must be determined within the social and economic context of the individual countries, and that parent and community roles must be integrated in planning ECCE services. (BF)

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EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION

Objectives and Issues

PS009528

Publié en français sous le titre

GARDE ET ÉDUCATION DE LA PRIME ENFANCE

Objectifs et problèmes

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1977

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CONTENTS

Preface 5

I. AN OVERVIEW 7

- Introduction 7
- The background 7
- The impact of recent research 8
- Demand and supply 9
- Administrative models 14
- A question of objectives 14

II. THE CURRENT SCENE IN SELECTED COUNTRIES 16

- Introduction 16
- The seven-country study 17
  - structure 17
  - standards of provision 21
  - actual supply and potential demand 26
  - parent participation and education 28
  - provision and co-ordination of ancillary services ... 30
  - policy 31
- An overview 37
  - objectives and methods 38
  - provision and standards 40

III. ISSUES AND OPTIONS 41

- The problem of context 41
- A case study 42
- The key issues 46
  - 'care' and 'education' 47
  - the effects of early experience 49
  - standards of provision and staff training 51
  - the 'training' of parents 52
  - the transition problem 55
- The options 56
  - demand and supply 56
  - the delivery structure 59
- Conclusion 61

PREFACE

At its Eighth meeting, held in April 1974, the Governing Board of CERI approved a programme of work intended to result in a major report on policy developments in Early Childhood Education by the end of 1976. This programme consisted of two complementary activities, the first being further analysis and clarification of the specific issues involved in an expansion of ECE facilities. The second consisted of an examination of experimental projects initiated within Member countries; the aim would be to identify common problems and to exchange ideas on the solution of these problems.

By the end of 1974 it had become apparent that the early childhood education (ECE) programme should be expanded, to become one on early childhood care and education (ECCE). This arose from evidence of the growing importance which many Member countries were attaching to the problems involved in coordinating educational provisions on early childhood with those - such as full-day care - arising from other areas of social policy. This was exemplified within OECD itself by the considerable importance of child-care questions in the programme on the role of women in the economy, under the aegis of the Social Affairs, Manpower and Education Directorate. Following discussions in the Secretariat it was agreed that the closest possible cooperation between this programme and that of CERI should be sought. The latter was therefore adjusted to include day-care questions in all current and forthcoming enquiries, and to regard the policy aspects of the early childhood programme as being concerned with the care and education of children from birth to compulsory school age.

It will be clear from the foregoing that the approved programme of work (as extended) was intended to result in a document primarily concerned with policy issues. In the inquiries carried out by the CERI Secretariat during 1975 no attempt was made to obtain detailed information from all Member countries. The alternative strategy was adopted of applying the limited available time and resources to a study in some depth of the problems faced by seven selected Member countries. This will be described in Chapter II, and there

amplified by information concerning other countries that has become available from a variety of sources. This account of the current scene is preceded (in Chapter I) by an overview of the immediate background to this report and of the main policy issues to which attention is now drawn. Detailed analysis of these and other issues and identification of unsolved problems is found in Chapter III.

The report has been prepared by Prof. Alastair Heron, University of Sheffield, Consultant to the CERI project on ECCE.

J.R. GASS

Director
Centre for Educational
Research and Innovation

I

AN OVERVIEW

Introduction

As the title implies, the purpose of this chapter is to provide the reader at the outset with an appreciation of the scene covered by this report. It opens with a brief account of the immediate background provided by earlier CERI activity, and continues by noting the changes in emphasis arising from recent research. Then follows an analysis of the current demand-supply situation which draws on material provided later in the report. This 'abstracting' strategy is then applied next to the problem of administrative models for service delivery, and finally to the question of objectives with which the main body of the report concludes.

The background

In late 1973 a conference on early childhood education organised by CERI took place at OECD headquarters in Paris. Participants included representatives of most Member countries and a number of invited individuals. A considerable amount of information was made available in national position papers and in specially-prepared reports. The latter included a summary of trends and issues then confronting research workers and policy-makers in this field, prepared by the CERI Secretariat. This summary, together with abridged versions of four of the expert papers submitted to the conference and two specially-prepared papers, has since been published in an OECD report*.

The issues identified by the 1973 conference as most deserving of attention in studies of policy may be summarised as follows:

The first was concerned with the scope of ECE provision, and led to questions such as:

- what are the arguments and evidence for or against universal pre-school provision ?
- if compulsory attendance is rejected, on what basis should provision be made?
- whether or not provision is universal, should it be sessional or full-time?

* Developments in Early Childhood Education. CERI/OECD, Paris 1975.

- if it is not universal, what should be the balance between response to demand and response to need?

The second main issue was that of "compensatory education", a topic to which an earlier CERI report* had been devoted. It was noted that the designation of certain geographical areas was too crude an approach to the identification of the disadvantaged, and that attempts to specify individuals in need of extra help though not living in obviously depressed areas would involve reconsideration of the criteria for judging 'disadvantage', if cultural intolerence is to be avoided. The third issue was that of service co-ordination - ways of improving the administrative machinery for providing educational, health, welfare and other services to children of this age. Attention was also directed under this heading to the transition from pre-primary provision to that of the compulsory primary school.

The fourth issue was that of parental involvement, now recognised as having a very wide spectrum of connotations, while the fifth included staffing ratios (both overall and trained to untrained) with the specific question of staff training, in both breadth and depth. Finally, attention was directed to current controversy concerning the relative amounts of time that should be devoted to pre-primary education to cognitive and to social/emotional development.

The impact of recent research

The other recent contribution to public discussion comes from fresh emphases in research on child development. These represent a shift from the main-pre-occupations of the 1965-1972 period - cognitive and linguistic 'deprivation' and the effects of attempted 'compensatory' action - towards a search for better understanding of the effects on later cognitive, emotional and social development of the child's environment during the first years of life. Increasing attention has been given to the two-way nature of the stimulus-response interaction between the first 'principal caretaker' (mostly usually the natural mother) and the child from birth onwards and especially during the first 2-3 years of life. While as yet no wholly satisfactory evidence has become available concerning the developmental consequences of this interaction, recent work has raised important questions about both the nature of the caretaker's response and the effects of frequent change of caretaker.

One of the main issues concerns the importance for the child's full normal emotional and intellectual development of separation from the mother in day-care provision. This has become an issue mainly because the well-known findings of Bowlby in relation to separation in

* Strategies of Compensation: A Review of Educational Projects for the Disadvantaged in the United States. CERI/OECD, Paris 1971.

residential care (including hospital care) have been extrapolated to day-care without evidence to justify such extrapolation. The whole matter is well stated in the following extract from a recent publication*:

> During the early 1950s it was insufficiently realised that the evidence assembled by Bowlby was drawn almost exclusively from institutional studies carried out in residential units which offered care that was psychologically of exceedingly poor quality, however well-intentioned. And it would seem that where the earlier studies went wrong was in equating a particular type of care outside the family (in this case the old-fashioned institution with its poor facilities, inadequate staffing, and high staff turnover, and its gross neglect of individual children's needs) with all forms of 'substitute' child care. The central issue is, however, the quality of care, not the place in which it is offered. Today the classical controversies among psychologists about the dangers of any form of maternal separation during the child's earliest years have given way to more detailed empirical studies of particular aspects of the environment which appear to influence particular aspects of the child's development.
>
> The earlier controversies did however have one very important outcome: they caused those charged with the planning of nursery services to consider much more carefully than ever they had in the past the kind of environment that would best meet the needs of young and immature children. It came to be recognised that the longer the time the young child spends away from his own home the more account has to be taken of his need for security and continuity in adult relationships. The problem of how to ensure these arises in an extreme form in the case of children who go into residential care; but the needs of young children in all-day care for stability and continuity of relationships are also taxing ones.

The shift in emphasis is therefore - not for the first time in recent decades - from the remedial to the preventative, when research workers concerned with child development are confronted with the problems thrown up by social change. But meanwhile they do not have firm answers to questions about the probable effects on very young children of various combinations of day-care at home and elsewhere.

Demand and supply

On this topic it is possible to be succinct: in many Member countries both have increased, leaving the gap little changed. But as will

* Tizard, J., Moss, P. and Perry, J.: All our Children. London: Temple Smith, 1976, pp. 168-169.

be shown by examples in the next chapter, such global and essentially quantitative trend descriptions can be misleading. In some countries the growth of services has been concentrated in the area of the traditionally part-day or sessional nursery-school or kindergarten, with relatively little increase in full-day provision. Within this group there is a further qualitative difference, arising from the fact that in some of the countries concerned provision was already near 100 % for the age-groups just below compulsory school age. In such countries, growth of provision was necessarily downwards to younger age-groups, while in others it may have been the first steps towards full provision even for the oldest children. It should be noted that compulsory school age varies from 5 (UK) to 7 (e.g. Scandinavian countries) with most countries at 6 years.

In an analogous but not necessarily complementary way, there have been qualitative differences in the growth of demand. Here one can note the frequently-reported tendency for part-day nursery-school places to be taken up disproportionately by children from so-called 'middle-class' homes. Until relatively recently this was generally reported as being complemented in almost mirror-image fashion by the low demand from such homes for full-day care. But this latter pattern appears to be changing as more mothers from such homes decide to re-enter or continue in full employment. This leads us to consider the nature of the current public debate on this question.

This focuses on two partially-independent but overlapping demands for full-day care of children between birth and compulsory school age. These have been considered in a document* specially prepared for the OECD Secretariat in connection with the working party on the role of women in the economy, from which we quote:

> "The demand originating from the economic situation is more a demand for quantity than quality provision. In its purest form, children and their needs are not the central concern of this demand: freeing both parents for work is .... It is likely to favour institutions with long hours of opening .... and all-year care provision ... The main purpose is to ensure that the child will be taken care of during periods when both parents are at work, at a minimum level of cost but with a certain basic level of standards, so parents will be willing to entrust their children to the care system .... when the marginal demand for extra workers (the women) falls off, so most likely will the demand for child care."

> "The movement towards securing equality in rights and opportunities for women has also generated pressure on child care policies .... In the end all discussions of equality for women come down

* Care of Children of Working Parents, MS/S/74.9, pp. 12-13 (OECD, mimeographed document).

to the question of who is to care for the young children ... Thus in contrast to labour-market demand, which seeks only to draw women into the labour force, this equality demand is most concerned with choice. Its aim is .... to create the conditions which equalize to some degree the external considerations in women's choice between work at home and work in the labour market .... Choice in the matter of the care and upbringing of children is in fact increasingly recognised as important .... for improving the quality of life for parents and for the family as a whole.

There is however a third factor which while economic in character does not fit in either the 'labour demand' or the 'equality of choice and opportunity' categories. This relates to the 'need' for employment on the part of the individual woman. Such economic need may be obvious and wholly objective, as in the case of the single or deserted mother. It may be nearly as obvious and objective in the case of a woman with several children whose husband is employed in the lowest-earning category of workers. Thereafter it enters a hard-to-define intermediate zone before emerging as 'choice', perhaps expressed subjectively as psychological 'need' by the married woman whose husband is in an 'upper-income bracket'.

Although a wide variation in indices and data bases from country to country renders valid comparison hazardous, some idea of the relationship between supply and demand may be gained from Table I, reproduced from a nine-country report* made available to OECD by the US Office of Child Development. The editors there note (p. 22) as follows:

i) coverage for children aged 3 and over is not only much more extensive than for younger children, but almost every country other than the US and Canada is currently moving towards universal and total preschool coverage for all children aged 3 and over, on a voluntary basis (or aged 4 and over where compulsory school begins at age 7) ;
ii) all (nine) countries consider that the quantity of programmes for all ages is inadequate, but all define the "3s and over" (or "over 3s") as the priority age group where expansion of programmes is concerned; only in those countries where preschool coverage is already very extensive is there substantial pressure for expanding coverage for the under 3s;
iii) the larger the number of mothers of preschool children in the labour force, the more extensive full-day coverage is;
iv) the predominant recognised indicator of "need" in almost all countries is the number of working mothers with children under compulsory school age;

* Child Care Programs in Nine Countries, Table 2. Office of Child Development, US Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1976.

Table I. ORGANIZED - CHILD - CARE COVERAGE[a]

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF CHILDREN UNDER CSA (in millions)				NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN CARE				WITH WORKING MOTHERS (Full Day)	
	TOTAL	UNDER AGE 3	AGE 3-CSA	TOTAL WITH WORKING MOTHERS	UNDER 3		3 TO CSA			
					FULL DAY	PART DAY	FULL DAY	PART DAY	UNDER 3	3-CSA
Canada	2.2 (under 6)	1.1	1.1	.6 (.24 under 3)	3,200	50,000	23,600	311,000	4,800	22,000
France	5.9 (under 6)	2.5	2.4	(.68 with children under 3)	359,000 Day Care 37,400 Kinder-garten 100,000 Family Day Care (licensed 222,000)	(Age 2 to CSA 2.2 million)			About 340,000	
Germany	5.5 (under 6)	2.5	3. (under 6)	.8 (.23 under 2 .58 aged 2-6)	19,200	-	140,000	1,300,000	Less than 10% in organized child care. At most 4%	
Israel (1975)	.42 (under 5)	.26	.16	.06	23,600 aged 0-5	-	100,000		4,000 (est.)	
Poland	3.7	1.7	2	520,000 under age 3	147,500		700,000 200,000 in sea-sonal progr.	70-80,000		
Sweden (1972)	.8			.220	About 200,000 children in all or part day care				140,000 children almost all in full day care	
United Kingdom (England and Wales)	4.0 (under 5)	2.0	2.0		Under 5 108,000 More than half in family day care	340,000 (or play groups)	157,000	45,000		
United States	20.	9.8	10.2	6.0	For under 6 year olds: 1 million in licensed care; (2 million in un-licensed care)		(kindergarten and nursery schools) 1.1 million	3.6 million		
Yugoslavia	2.6	1.5 (under 4)	1.1 (4-7)	-	No firm data but very few children in care		(4 to CSA Ranges among Republics from 1.6%-35%)		-	-

a) The terms "part day" and "full day", used in describing coverage, are defined as follows: i) Full day is at least 6 hours per day or the normal school day for the country specified. ii) Part day is less than the above but at least 3 hours daily.

FOR CHILDREN UNDER COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE (CSA)

COVERAGE ASSESSMENT			NEED ASSESSMENT: BASIS		
PERCENT OF COHORT		GENERAL COMMENTS	RATIONALE	NUMBER OF PLACES	
UNDER 3	3-CSA			FULL DAY	PART DAY
4%	28%	Less than 5% of the children of working mothers are in full day care; 5% are cared for in their own home; the rest are in informal arrangements	600,000 children under 6 have working mothers	200,000 - 600,000	No National Estimates
15% (22% of 2-3 year olds)	85%		Gov't surveys; 25% of kindergartens have waiting lists	Double existing no. of day care and licensed family day care; kindergarten projected for full coverage for over 3s, 50% of 3s	
Less than 1%	44%		Waiting lists for day care range from 2 months - 2 years	No National Supplemental before and after school programme for most 3-6	Estimates. By 1980, kindergarten for all 3-6 year-olds
12% (est.)	80%	65% of the children in day care have working mothers	Gov't policy - 100% coverage for 3s and over 30% for under 3	50,000 more day care places for 0-3; 15% increase for 3-5 year-olds	29,000 places for 0-3
	50% (70% in urban areas)	30% of children of working mothers who are under 2 are in care; 90% of the children in day care programmes have working mothers	Complete coverage of children of working mothers	Kindergarten by 1980 100% coverage of 3-7s	
25%		50% of children of working mothers	Complete coverage for all pre-school children	1975 - 100% of all 6 year olds. Then, 4-6-year-olds with handicaps (physical, mental, emotional); all children of working or student parents, aged 4 and over	
38% of children aged 2-5		Figures include education only for Wales, no day care	630,000 working mothers, 1/3 of whom work full time; 6% of all children under 5 have 1-parent families	Preschool places for 15% of 3- and 4-year-olds; 35% of 3-year-olds by 1982	35% of 3-year-olds; 75% of 4-year-olds by 1982
28% of total cohort in formal care. 45% of those aged 3-6, in pre-school		8% of total cohort in unlicensed care (est.)	6 million children of working mothers; 3.3 million disadvantaged and handicapped (all under 6)	9.3 (4.7 + 1.3) - 3.3	
-	-	Coverage increased 50% between 1966-1970. No specific projections as to size of unmet need but acknowledged to be substantial. Long term goal is to cover all children of working parents or children otherwise needing care	-	-	-

b) The data included for each country reflect the most current figures available, unusually (but not always) 1973; where known and consistent for all categories in the table, the dates are specified.

v) the major pressure for expanding care comes from parental need and desire (labour force participation or other concerns such as interest in early education);

v)) all (nine) countries recognise the need for "before- and after-school-hours" child-care programmes (for school vacations as well) for children under age 14. Yet, with only two exceptions, coverage is sparse, sporadic, with very little systematic, consistently-kept data available.

As is developed more fully later (Chapter III, 56-58), the options on the demand side are limited so far as control is concerned, primarily by the simple fact that "if women, now given the choice, wish both to have children and to be free to do other things with their time as well as nurture them, they will do so".

On the supply side attention is drawn (p. 57) to three determinants of priority for expenditure on ECCE provisions: the prevailing social and political philosophy, the available and politically-convincing evidence of popular unsatisfied demand, and the effects of economic circumstances on public expenditure and the level of employment. Against this background, the supply questions are discussed (pp. 57-58) in terms of how much? of what? to whom? and how delivered?

Administrative models

Three structural models for the administration and delivery of ECCE services are identified and described (with examples) in Chapter II (pp. 39-40) and this question is pursued near the end of the report (p. 60). Here the main issue is that of integration versus co-ordination. The former implies the vesting of administrative responsibility in a unified 'early childhood service' responsible either to a single minister or to a committee of ministers at Cabinet level. The latter (co-ordination) can in theory permit the division of responsibility between ministries, but in practice frequently proves difficult to achieve. Examples of both approaches are cited.

A question of objectives

The detailed study of ECCE services in seven Member countries, amplified by additional material on eight other countries, which constitutes the central core of this report (in Chapter II), ends with an 'overview' section where the question of objectives is first considered (pp. 37-38). The major distinction to be identified is between the objectives relating to children between birth and 2 1/2 or 3 years of age, and those for the older pre-primary children up to compulsory school ages which range from 5 to 7 years. For the younger group the objectives of ECCE provision appear to be mainly in relation to the needs of women; for the older group, the objectives are generally 'educational' in the broad sense. The issue of the relation between 'care' and 'education' is explored in Chapter III (pp. 47-49).

In this report an attempt is made to face squarely the special problems involved in shaping and executing policy in the ECCE field. To an extent significantly greater than is the case for compulsory education, national and local public expenditure on ECCE tends to be a political response to what are perceived as the socially dominant values surrounding women, children and the family. These values are everywhere in a state of flux, and it has proved difficult to anticipate change with any degree of accuracy sufficiently far in advance. The most obvious example of this is to be found in the 'qualitative gap' which has appeared between increased provision and new demand in recent years. Policy makers who have been persuaded, to a degree naturally varying from one country to another, to provide increased services - mostly part-time, mostly of the traditional nursery school/kindergarten type - are now finding themselves faced with evidence of fresh demands. These are however for more full-day provision of a basically custodial type, and in respect of children from birth through to compulsory school age, - and even beyond, in the form of after-school and school-holiday care. For most Member countries this constitutes a new situation.

Such a new situation brings into sharp focus the fact that ECCE provision is relatively expensive. This question is examined in the present report (pp. 51-52, 56-57) and leads to the conclusion that urgent attention should be given to the need for more evidence about minimum acceptable standards - of physical provision, of staff training, of staff/child ratios - in relation to the care-and-education needs of young children at different ages between birth and compulsory school age.

But the principal inference from the data and discussion provided in this report is that ECCE policy for the rest of this century must depend on the evolution of a new set of social values concerning the 'importance' of individuals (both child and adult), the family as a unit, and the community. Another issue finds its focus in the world of work, where 'equality' could go far beyond legislative encouragement of 'equal pay' and 'non-discrimination' as between men and women. It is beginning to be realised that the problem of day-care might eventually solve itself, so to speak, if the working hours and conditions of employment for both men and women could be made equally flexible and interchangeable: the 'liberation' of women from the home may in the long run depend, for essentially practical reasons, on the 'liberation' of men from the work-place. Just as the full health of the individual can be promoted by a judicious balancing of work, play and sleep, so could it also be promoted within the family unit by a balancing of the time spent by a children with their mother, their father, and the care-and-education resources of the community.

II

THE CURRENT SCENE IN SELECTED COUNTRIES

Introduction

As in any field of concern to OECD Member countries, the full canvas required for an overview of ECCE matters in all of them would be too vast for the purpose in hand. But it is not easy to select a sample, because there are few if any parameters on which any sample could fairly be described as representative. Even if there were, one could face the fact that it is not yet possible to expect strictly comparable data for what is by definition an area of voluntary consumer participation. Finally, the size of any group of countries selected for special study must be a function of the time available, the Secretariat resources in staff and funds, and the amount of detail sought.

In the present case, the time available for field work was less than a year; both staff and funds were limited; and the amount of detail seen as desirable was considerable. A decision was taken to study six Member countries, all in Europe: a fortunate turn of events permitted the addition of a seventh country, overseas. Three of the original six - Austria, Switzerland and the Federal Republic of Germany - were selected to represent countries with a federal constitution and structure of government. It was of course fully recognised that no two such countries have an identical or even a closely similar pattern, and that in any event historical, demographic, economic and other factors would of necessity combine to generate considerable variety in such an area as early childhood care and education. But the very fact of a federal structure imposes conditions for policy making and for development of services that are additional to those obtaining in any country with a single central government, however it may have chosen to devolve the tasks of policy making and execution.

No such clear-cut criteria were available for the selection of three non-federated Member countries, and the considerations actually invoked must necessarily be seen as in the last resort arbitrary. In the simplest terms, the objective was to choose countries where "things were happening" in the ECCE field, with some special attention to problem areas such as the transition from pre-primary provisions to the basic school system; the integration of traditionally separated care, education and other services; and the 'involvement' of parents and of the local community in the ECCE process. The countries selected were

Denmark, Finland and the Netherlands, to which it fortunately became possible to add New Zealand.

The co-operation of the appropriate authorities in these seven countries was sought and obtained fully. Each country was visited and a previously-circulated statement of objectives and an information checklist were worked through in detail with officials and other persons nominated by the government concerned. It was not possible in the time available to make visits to state capitals in Austria and Germany, while in Switzerland the information sources were located in Geneva and Zurich.

From time to time the perspective is broadened by drawing on the report, from which material has already been quoted, commissioned by the US Office of Child Development and made available to CERI. This consists of the child-care sections from a much broader study of social welfare provisions in nine countries, edited and provided with appropriate commentary. The material was thus obtained in a quite different context from that of the CERI seven-country study, and the acquaintance of the nine different authors with the early childhood field - in their own country or more widely - understandably varied considerably.

The information is organised under a small number of headings. These are structure; standards; supply and demand; parent participation and education; co-ordination of ancillary services; and policy. The chapter ends with an overview in which an attempt is made to evaluate the current scene in the light of the agreement and differences observed in this material.

Terminological problems abound in the ECCE field, but it will perhaps suffice to note at the outset the varying use made of the terms 'kindergarten' and 'pre-school'. Everywhere except in the USA the former denotes what in the UK is called a 'nursery school' (or 'nursery class' when located in a primary school) or in France an 'école maternelle'. In the USA the term has been widely appropriated for the first year (age 6) of the compulsory school system, prior to Grade 1. 'Pre-school' is consequently used there as an alternative for describing the voluntary provisions for the 3-5 age-group. But in several European countries 'pre-school' refers explicitly to provision - part-day or full school-day, immediately prior to or incorporated within the compulsory school system - which is intended to prepare the child for the curriculum of that system. In this report 'kindergarten' will therefore be employed as a generic term for all pre-primary provision of the 'nursery-school' type.

The seven-country study

Structure - In Austria a law was passed which laid down guidelines for the organisation of kindergartens and schools, giving responsibility for the former to the Länder (states). Each Land has subsequently passed its own law, but so far most have not spelled out

the details. The Federal Government retains responsibility for the training of kindergarten teachers and for the standards applicable to their employment. At both Federal and Land Level, kindergartens are the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, and co-operation is achieved mainly through the informal influence of the Bund-Länder Konferenz. Kindergarten provision is from 3 years of age to compulsory school entry at 6 years, but there are provisions in Vorschule (pre-schools) for 6-year-olds not considered ready for school. For children under 3 years provision (where available) is in crèches (Säuglingskrippen and Krabbelstuben) under the auspices of private organisations and individuals: here the Federal government can act directly by the provision of funds.

The situation in Switzerland is unique, in that all responsibility for early childhood care and education resides at cantonal or local level. There is therefore no national legislation, and what there is within cantons exists only in those communities which run or subsidise crèches or kindergartens. In the absence of legislation private organisations (such as the Swiss Association of Crèches and the Swiss Association of Kindergartens) formulate recommended codes, and the Institute for the Mental Hygiene of Children (based in Zurich and financed by the organisation Pro Juventute) has set up an advisory board to deal with ECCE questions. There is a strong separation between the provisions for the very young child (in crèches) and that for older children (in kindergartens) in that the former is almost entirely provided under private or commercial auspices.

In the Federal Republic of Germany the constitution makes a clear two-fold distinction: with two exceptions, all provision for children below compulsory school age is the responsibility of the ministries of social welfare at both Federal and Land Level, whereas in educational matters the Länder have the full authority. As a result, the Federal influence from an educational aspect on ECCE matters must be mediated through social welfare legislation and through the activities of the Bund-Länder Kommission set up by the Länder ministers of education (usually called Kultusminister) in collaboration with the Federal minister. On the social welfare side, if the Federal government passes a law the Länder governments must follow by passing their own (Konkurrierende Gesetzgebung). The exceptions mentioned above are the two Länder of Bavaria and Hesse: these both have pre-primary affairs in their Ministry of Education (Hesse as a separate department). The resulting constitutional position is currently the subject of a lawsuit.

Looking across the three federal countries, we note that while all Länder in Austria have kindergarten laws only seven do so in Germany (though the rest have 'guidelines'), and in Switzerland nine cantons are wholly without such legislation and only four have specific kindergarten laws, the remaining cantons relying directly or indirectly on their ordinary school legislation. In Austria and Switzerland the local board may be involved in kindergarten matters; for example, in French-

speaking cantons (especially Geneva) most of the classes for 4's, and all those for 6-year-olds, are under local school board authority. The 'communication flow' in Germany starts from above, in matters of crèches and kindergartens usually from Federal level but from Land level where pre-school classes (for 5 year olds) are concerned. The same is true for Austria, but the Land is there the initiating level. In Switzerland the movements must start from cantonal or local level - in German-speaking areas most usually the latter.

Turning now to the non-federal countries, in Denmark the responsibility for all ECCE provision other than pre-school classes (for 6-year-olds) has until now been vested in the Ministry for Social Welfare. But from April 1976 these responsibilities are being devolved to the local authorities (municipalities) who will be free to decide priorities for the use of their total social welfare budget. This will be state-subsidised at 50 per cent on an 'across-the-board' basis, up to fixed limits.

Municipal schools provide about 90% of the pre-school classes. ECCE provision consists mainly of day-care centres for the 0-3 group and kindergartens for the 3-6 group. This is supported by family day-care schemes (two-thirds 0-2, one-third 3-6) and also by a new system of 'integrated centres'. These 48-place centres are planned for twelve 0-3, eighteen 3-6, and as 'leisure-time' accommodation for eighteen school-age children. Day-care centres are provided (to about 60%) by 'self-governing institutions' in which the public investment may range from nil to more than three-quarters, the remaining 40% of centres being supplied by local government. Kindergartens follow a similar pattern (64% public; 33% local government; 3% private).

In the Netherlands, all nursery schools (ages 4-6 inclusive) are the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, whether they are 'public' (provided by the local municipality) or 'private' (provided by Protestant, Roman Catholic, or 'neutral' organisations). Funding for teachers' salaries goes direct to the appropriate local board; but all other funding is channelled via the municipal councils. On proposals for new nursery schools the Provincial Councils must be satisfied on planning grounds: these can also serve as an 'appeal court' in case of dispute between a board and a municipal council. The boards (public, Protestant, Roman Catholic, neutral private) are the key bodies in the implementation of the 1955 law concerning pre-primary education. All provision for children below four years of age is under the control of the Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Social Welfare, but until very recently almost all action (mostly in the form of subsidy) has been at community level only.

Finland is in the process of implementing its Child Day-care Act of April 1973, which laid new administrative and economic foundations for the systematic development and provision of all forms of early childhood care and education in a single integrated system. Central responsibility has been vested in the National Board of Social Welfare, under the Ministry of Social Welfare and Health. This responsibility

is devolved through the eleven provincial boards of social welfare, and then to the community social welfare boards. The National Board is responsible for planning a national five-year programme to meet the targets of the day-care plan. In so doing the Board calls on the communities annually to put forward (through the provincial boards) their perceived local needs. In this way the national five-year plan is revised each year in the light of a 'running' estimate originating with the local communities. The provincial boards supervise all day-care provisions, through ratification of local regulations, consideration of plans and proposals, and inspection of new day homes. The educational authorities actively participate in developing the content and methods related to the objectives of pre-primary education within the framework of child-care under the Act, and all training of nursery teachers is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education.

In New Zealand the Department of Education is responsible for all 'free kindergartens' (public as opposed to private); for all 'recognised play centres'; and for pre-school groups or classes attached to isolated rural schools. Playcentres are operated by parents who have been trained for this work, and by other parents all of whom are expected to help, on a regular past-time basis. Their remuneration, if any, is nominal and decided locally. The necessary organisation is provided by 22 local playcentre associations which belong to the New Zealand Playcentre Federation. The age-range is 2 1/2-5 years, but it should be noted that effectively all 5-year-old children are enrolled voluntarily in primary schools, even though the compulsory school age is 6 years. All other day-care provision for children 0-5 years, including private kindergartens, comes under the aegis of the Department of Social Welfare, but some advisory assistance is provided by the Department of Education. In general, all early childhood care and education provisions in New Zealand come through voluntary associations assisted in various ways, especially financial, by the state.

It is evident that so far as structure is concerned, these four countries present some similiarities but also some important differences. In Denmark and Finland the responsibility of the social welfare authorities for state or local ECCE provisions is complete from birth to compulsory school-age, whereas in the Netherlands there is a division at 4 years of age, when responsibility passes to the education authorities. This has some parallel in New Zealand, but above 2 1/2 years the social welfare authorities continue to have the responsibility if the provision is full-day, or is sessional in a private nursery school. In Denmark all responsibility is on the point of being devolved to local communities; in the Netherlands these have until recently carried the full responsibility for day-care of the 0-3 years group, but have shared responsibility for the 4-6 group with church and other private bodies; while in New Zealand the characteristic mode is state support for local voluntary effort which has become organised on a national basis. The structure in Finland is unique in this group of seven countries, in that its integrated character involves two partnerships: one between central

government and the local communities (as was until now the case in Denmark), the other between the social welfare and education ministries in matters of content and training.

This perspective can be widened by reference to the USA report, which observes that in that country "the structure of child care does not lend itself to any classification into clearly-delineated systems". In Canada "the administration of day-care services comes within the jurisdiction of the provincial (= state) governments, usually under departments of welfare. There is no consistent national pattern of service or of administration ... the system varies in auspices, extensiveness and type of provision from province to province". The same is true of pre-schools or kindergartens under provincial departments of education, operating through local school boards. In 1974 three-quarters of the day-care centres and 'more than half' the pre-schools were reported as privately-operated.

Israel's dual system involves three central ministries. One system consists of day-care centres, with some under the control of the Ministry of Social Welfare and others under the Ministry of Labour. The former are for children aged 1-3 years and are intended to prevent or to compensate for cultural deprivation in "backward sectors of the population". The latter, for children 1-5 years, are for the explicit purpose of enabling more mothers to work. The other system, under the control of the Ministry of Education, provides kindergartens for children aged 3-5 on a half-day basis (08.00-13.00). 90% of the day-care centres are owned and operated by women's voluntary organisations, most of the remainder by local government; for kindergartens the reverse is approximately the case. There is also "an extensive and varied publicly sponsored and operated programme" to cover before- and after-school hours.

Standards of provision - This term is used to cover the physical provisions; the size of groups and units; the staff/children ratios; and the training of staff. The data available under these headings varied from country to country.

In Austria there is no general basis for the standards of provision in crèches, while those for kindergartens are specified in detail by one Land only as yet. Kindergarten teachers have four years' training following eight years of general education, as compared with primary teachers with two years of training after thirteen years of general education. There are plans (in suspense for economic reasons) to equate the training entry and duration requirements. Although the target staff ratio is 1 : 25, actual figures are reported to range from 30 to 40, with an average of about 34. Centres for full-day care take as many as 130 children, and the space available is described as 'generally inadequate'. These centres are usually open from 06.30 to 17.30: kindergartens without provision for lunch are open 08.00-12.00, 14.00-18.00.

In Switzerland the central authorities of the Confederation are responsible for the standards of professional education, but since non-medical work in child care is not yet considered to require much training it falls outside such legislation. In most German-speaking cantons, the crèches are supervised by a commission organised by the foundirg organisation, or by its administrative staff: or in the case of public crèches by local politically-nominated representatives. Generally speaking, subsidised kindergartens must conform to cantonal laws or regulations: these usually cover the construction and equipment: the training and salary of the teachers: and the number of ages of the children. Control is exercised by a cantonal board, often in co-operation with local school boards.

Training courses for staff in crèches and kindergartens are organised by cantons, by local communities and by private organisations. They tend to last 2 or 3 years (starting at age 17) and often follow the curricula recommended by the Schweizer Krippenverein and the Schweizer Kindergartenverein. On group size, the target in Zurich is 25 with one trained staff member but in many kindergartens there are up to 35 children. Most regulations specify 'adequate' room for each child. Kindergartens are usually open 09.00 - 11.00 and 14-00-16.00, with two afternoons per week for each child. Crèches are open 06.30-19.00, if following the recommendation of the Schweizer Krippenverein. In the rest of Switzerland, where the two associations have fewer adherents, standards generally are even more varied.

In Germany standards of all kinds for both crèches and kindergartens vary as between the Länder. In each Land it is however the responsibility of the 'youth offices' of the social welfare ministry to monitor standards in respect of staff, space, equipment, teaching duties and hours of opening. But this may only mean one visit in four years, plus periodic written reports from the crèche or kindergarten to the administrative office. A recent development is the 'Moderator' system introduced as a 'model experiment' in North-Rhine-Westphalia. This involved monthly all-day visits to each kindergarten by teams consisting of a social pedagogue (see below) and a psychologist. This team discussed with the staff various questions such as method, organisation, and relations with parents. Every two months these teams had meetings of their own with a view to the development of guidelines, to be made available in published form to teachers and to parents.

The social pedagogue is a new profession arising from general dissatisfaction with the quality of kindergartens. Previously the supervisor had a minimum of 3 years' experience beyond training as a kindergarten teacher; such positions are now being filled by social pedagogues, whose professional preparation consists of 3 further years at polytechnic plus 1 year of practical work. This has resulted, not surprisingly, in a good deal of controversy and in growing discontent among experienced kindergarten teachers. Many of them are endeavouring to get the additional experience and training which would enable

them to move up into primary school work. This is reported as causing many Länder to consider the creation of new, more compressed training courses to ensure a continuing supply of kindergarten teachers. In 1973 the overall ratio of trained to untrained staff in crèches and kindergartens was approximately 1 : 1.

Across the three federal countries there appears to be a general weakness in the provision and control of standards in both crèches and kindergartens. The situation has recently been recognised in Germany and may be expected to change as the Länder implement their laws and guidelines through detailed regulations. Variation in actual practice is very great indeed, both within and between the three countries.

Among the non-federal countries Denmark faces at least the possibility that its present nation-wide standards will become widely varied (except for buildings) once central responsibility and control is devolved to local municipalities. It is hoped that some way will be found to tie subsidy to locally-enforced standards: but this will depend on the reactions of municipalities, since they could appeal against such a rule to the Ministry of Interior under the Municipalities Self-Government Act. At present, for work with children under 3, staff (now social pedagogues) are trained in colleges for child-care workers under the Ministry of Social Welfare. For non-residential work with children 3-6 years of age, staff are kindergarten teachers trained at one of the twenty colleges under the control of the Ministry of Education. The educational level at entry, the length of the courses, and the status at graduation are all the same for trained staff of all categories working with children in the age-range 0-6 years. In this connection a difference should be noted between the similarly-named 'social pedagogues' in Denmark and Germany respectively.

In 1975 standards prescribe "one fully-trained person and one other adult" per group of children, maximum group-size to be 10 for the under-threes and 20 for the over-threes. A 'leader' must be provided for each centre. There is no designated maximum size for a centre, but they are usually designed for three groups of 20 children, or two groups of 20 plus one of 10 children. They can be open from 07.00 - 18.00, as locally considered necessary, and must be open all year round. Centres are also open for 'half day' groups of children.

In the Netherlands there are 48 training colleges for nursery-school teachers, almost all fully separate from primary-teacher colleges. Entry is after 4 years' secondary education (5 years for entry to primary training colleges) and courses last 3 years, including 800 hours of nursery-teaching practice. Head teacher qualifications must be obtained by subsequent evening courses. Nursery teacher salaries are lower than those for primary teachers.

Apart from a student on nursery practice, the trained nursery teachers usually work without full-time assistants, the national average group size being 29 in 1973, no differentiation being made within the 4-6 age-group. There is no official maximum size for a nursery

school; the most usual size is 60-90 children, but there are a few large ones with seven groups (200 children). The normal 'full day' is five hours, children going home to lunch except in some rural areas. The school year is the same as for primary schools (40 weeks). It is stated officially that there is little public pressure for longer-day or longer-year availability; some municipalities are providing, at the parents' expense, untrained 'custodians' to cover the before-school, lunchtime and after-school periods. Control of standards is through the Ministry's inspectorate: there are at present 28 inspectors for over 7,000 nursery schools. Standards for crèches have until now been a local - and hence very variable - matter, and are only currently under discussion by the Ministry for Social Welfare.

In Finland standards, especially as regards staff training, are under review as implementation of the 1973 Act proceeds. At present teachers for children 3-6 years are trained in separate colleges (at present private) or (recently) in university institutes of education; in each case the course lasts two years. Children 0-3 years of age are at present looked after in the day-homes by children's nurses, who receive a one-year training in a hospital nursing school. There are some new courses to train 'advisers' who could assist the present day-home staffs.

Each group of children must have one trained staff member and one assistant, and large day-homes also have a supervisor. Group size is age-related: under 1 year - six; 1-2 - twelve; 3-6 - twenty (if part-day, then twenty-five). Handicapped children can be mixed with normal children provided the staff: children ratio is adjusted. The maximum size for a day-home is 100 children, but 40 children is characteristic. A minimum area of 60 sq. metres per child is prescribed, which includes indoor and outdoor minima of 9 and 15 sq. metres respectively. Part-day homes are open 4-5 hours, full-day 10 hours; the former are usually open from August to May or June, the latter can be open the full year if considered necessary. Family day-care mothers, who can look after four children (including her own pre-primary children) are employed by the local social welfare boards. They have 150 hours' basic training and further training organised by the supervisors, of whom there is one for each 45 FDC mothers.

The control of standards is entrusted to the inspectors of the provincial boards of social welfare, who at present are usually social workers without special training in day-home work. This is recognised as the weak link in the chain, but the general work overload on the inspectors makes their release for in-service training difficult and economic stringency renders unlikely any increase of provincial staff. Some of the larger communities employ their own supervisors, with kindergarten or child psychology training and relevant experience.

In New Zealand standards are prescribed in considerable detail by the Kindergarten Regulations 1959 (with subsequent amendments) and the Standards for the Organisation and Administration of Play-

centres 1968. Control of these standards is initially the responsibility of the local association, and ultimately of the Department of Education's fieldworkers (thirty-three in 1975). Standards for centres under the responsibility of the Department of Social Welfare are laid down in the Child Care Centre Regulations 1960: these regulations are "administered in the Department of Education", but centres are in fact visited by officers from the Departments of Social Welfare and of Health. Teachers in kindergartens recognised by the Department of Education are trained at state expense for two years in colleges which also train primary teachers (for three years). Training courses for those working in child care centres are provided by the two main technical institutes.

Kindergartens have a staff : children ratio of 1 : 20, it being noted that the children attending the five morning sessions are a different group from those in the three afternoon sessions. (The former are usually 4's, the latter 3's). Playcentres have as a minimum provision one supervisor, one assistant and two mother-helpers to 30 children. In Child Care centres there must be one adult staff member on duty for each child under 2 years of age; for older children the ratios vary according to whether the centre is open for more than 4 hours daily or not. In the latter case the figures are 1 : 6, 2 : 20, 3 : 30, 4 : 40, 5 : 50.

The USA report states that in France all private and public institutions involved in the care, protection and placing of children aged 0-6 years are under the supervision of the Action Sanitaire et Sociale, including the following :

- descriptions and standards regarding equipment, etc.
- requirements concerning staff qualifications, ratios, training, etc.
- health and medical supervision of children
- standards (e.g. size, safety) for premises
- licensing (after investigation) of childminders.

Staffing ratios for children under 3 are set nationally at 1 : 5 for children not yet walking, 1 : 8 for the remainder. For écoles maternelles (kindergartens) the target maximum ratio is 1 : 35 but frequently exceeds 1 : 40. No formal training is required for crèche staff, but most are child-care aids from schools accredited by the Ministry of Health and Social Security, and about one-third are reported as having a nursery-school teacher on the staff. As is the case for all those in the kindergartens, these teachers are graduates of special programmes in training colleges. Supervised family day-care systems are directed by trained child-care social workers, responsible for up to 40 children in 7 or 8 homes, and part-time day-care centres must be operated by a woman between the ages of 21 and 65 years who is a graduate (child-care worker, social worker, midwife, nurse) from an accredited school, and has at least one year's experience in an institution or programme for children. She must have the assistance of one trained staff person for every 20 children.

It will be now be apparent that standards of provision in the non-federal countries, while still variable - especially in relation to the

25

day-care of the 0-3 age-group - are prima facie more satisfactory than those currently obtaining in the three federal countries. Further consideration of this aspect of the present scene is best postponed until the policies of the seven countries have been reviewed, but it is not premature to anticipate a place for standards in any attempt to state and analyse the problems and issues that lie ahead.

Actual supply and potential demand - By their nature statistics representing supply of and demand for any service which has a voluntary uptake must be difficult to put into a meaningful relationship. Statistics for the provision of such a service are to varying degrees out-of-date, while those for demand are forward estimates. It can of course be noted with fair accuracy if and to what extent uptake fell short of provision at a given date; but the reverse is seldom if ever the case, even where extreme care is observed in the use made of waiting lists or other evidence of excess demand. Uptake may of course 'fall short' if provision is in the wrong form or in the wrong place.

The final obstacle to comparability of data is constituted by inter- and intra-national variability in age-limits and in categories of official provision of ECCE services.

In Austria all employed mothers are entitled to maternity leave with pay for one year, so it is understandable that in all Austria there are 33 crèches (Säuglingskrippen) for infants under one year, accommodating 434 children. For children 1- 2 years there are 154 crèches (Krabbelstuben) accommodating 4,240 children: this is about two per cent of this age-group. Taking the under-three group as a whole, the vast majority (4200 ex 4674) of the children have working mothers. This is in sharp contrast with the figures for children in kindergartens (c. 141,000) of whom less than half (c. 61,000) have working mothers. These places were provided in 2,421 all-year and 148 seasonal kindergartens; of these about half provide a full day with lunch, most of the remainder requiring the children to return home for lunch.

The coverage in kindergarten is 12, 30 and 58 per cent for 3's, 4's and 5's respectively. The ratio of public to voluntary organisation provision is approximately two to one, but in addition there are 46 factory-based kindergartens (with c. 2250 children). Overall provision has increased in Austria from 21.5% in 1971 to 41% in 1974 for the 3-6 age-group, but there is great variation across the Länder: Vienna and Lower Austria both provide 62% of this age-group with places in kindergartens.

It is very difficult to state with any confidence the situation in Switzerland. What is certain is that the local and cantonal differences in physical geography, demography and pattern of urbanisation are so great as to make any national averages meaningless. In terms of absolute totals it has been estimated that there are probably about 150 crèches and 5,000 kindergartens in Switzerland, catering approximately for about 7,500 and 150,000 children respectively. How this provision relates to demand is impossible to assess; but it may be

noted that the same devolution of decision-making in Switzerland which renders our present task difficult makes it easier than in some other countries for local demands to be heard and met. An example of this occurred in the city and canton of Zurich in 1974, when 5,686 signatures were obtained in support of a demand for more day-care centres. When this came to the vote in early 1976, however, the result was that the proposal was rejected by a three-to-one majority (221,278 against 69,362 for).

For Germany the point of departure is to be found in the 1973 General Plan for Education so far as the age-group 3-5 is concerned. This plan anticipated a 1975 population of children 3 and 4 years of age of 1.44 million. Using an estimated demand of 52% for kindergarten places, the target was set at 750 thousand. For the 5 year-olds the estimated demand was 60%, giving a target of 806 thousand places if all were in kindergartens. If in the event some of these places were provided within the primary schools, the coverage could be allowed to rise as a consequence. By the end of 1974 it seems likely that these targets for 1975 had already been met, but with wide variations among the Länder - exemplified for the 5 year-olds by Baden-Württemberg and Schleswig-Holstein with 90 and 25% coverage respectively. The largest Land in terms of both area and populations, North-Rhine-Westphalia, now expects to fulfil estimated demand by the middle of 1976 at an average level of 75%. This estimate is based on assumed uptakes of 38, 86 and 100% for 3's, 4's and 5's respectively. The picture for the under-threes is altogether different: there were in 1973 about 20,000 crèches places for this age-group of about 2.5 million children.

For Denmark the coverage in 1975 was as follows:

AGE GROUP	0-1	1	2	3	4	5	6
%	11	17	22	35	38	34	20

These figures relate to day-care centres, recognised day-care foster homes (family day care), and kindergartens. The figures for the 5- and 6-year-olds could be augmented - in the latter case to about 70% - by including the 38,000 children attending pre-school classes three hours daily in the primary schools.

In the Netherlands by 1974 eighty-eight per cent of 4-year-olds and almost all 5's and 6's were in nursery schools and primary schools (about one-quarter of the 6's). Preliminary results from a survey commissioned by the Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Social Welfare indicate that about one-quarter of the 2's and 3's were (in September 1975) receiving some form of day-care - but of these very few indeed were full-day. By far the bulk of this provision takes the form of attendance at part-day playgroups.

For Finland the 1974 position was as follows: about 5 1/4 % of the 0-2 age-group were in full-day care, plus others (estimated as a further 5%) in community-controlled family day-care, making a total of about 10% without taking account of supervised private day-care, for which figures were not available. For the age-group 3-6 years, about 7 1/2% were in full-day homes, plus others (estimated as about half as many) in community-controlled family day care, making a total of 10% (again without including private day-care). Taking these figures together, it can be said that 10% of all pre-primary children were in full-day care under community auspices, plus others in supervised private day-care. In addition, a further 9 1/5% of the 3-6 age-group attend day-homes part-time.

In New Zealand in 1975 the total population of children 0-4 years inclusive was 308,000. There were about 400 day-care centres providing places for nearly 12,000 children in the age-group 0-4 years inclusive. Places were provided in the age-group 2 1/2-4 years inclusive for about 55,000 children in kindergartens and playcentres recognised by the Department of Education. Although it is thus possible to state that places were available for about 22% of all children under 5 years of age (when almost all enter primary school one year ahead of the legal requirement), it was not possible to obtain an age-breakdown of the children in day-care centres.

The relevant table and accompanying summary statement from the USA report have already been reproduced in the present document (Table I, pp. 12-13).

The contents of this section have amply illustrated the points to which attention was drawn at the beginning. But it is nevertheless apparent that the major difference is not between countries in terms of total provision, large though those differences are: it is between the provision of places for part-day or full school-length day in kindergartens (nursery schools, nursery classes, etc.). In some countries the latter provision has gone well past the half-way mark; in no one of these seven countries has the day-care provision done so.

Parent participation and education - in Austria this appears as yet to be virtually non-existent, beyond some attendance at parents' meetings. The efforts of the Swiss 'Association for Parent Education' are noteworthy, even though these so far appear to reach relatively few and mostly well-educated parents. The Association provides the administrative support for the organisation of evening courses for groups of about twenty parents, mostly mothers, and for the training of group leaders. The latter tend to be teachers or social workers, together with some clergymen and lay persons, and some observers have noted a tendency for approach to be reflecting concern about current prospects for children's development in today's society. This Zurich-based initiative is paralleled in southern Switzerland by the activity in several cantons of the adult education movement.

There appears to be widespread but extremely uneven activity in various parts of Germany. The new kindergarten laws provide for parent participation: for example, in North Rhine-Westphalia the law prescribes for no less than three modes - the parents' meeting, the parents' council, and the kindergarten council. In the last-named, parents are represented along with teacher and organisational representatives, and this body must be consulted on such matters as the employment or dismissal of staff. A similar provision is anticipated in Berlin, and both Bremen and Baden-Württemberg have issued guidelines on parent participation. One 'model investigation' in Berlin involved 20 groups of parents and teachers.

The regulations in Denmark provide specifically for parent participation in day nurseries and kindergartens, and it is reported that most centres do take active steps to involve the parents. At least two members of the board governing a centre must be chosen by the parents, and they are thus involved in decision-making on such matters as the budget; guidelines for the daily programme; plans for new premises, etc. All parents must be called to a general meeting at least twice a year. In the Netherlands there appears to have been relatively little active participation by parents in the planning and operation of nursery schools, perhaps as a result of the fact that parents have been familiar with the legal obstacle to such activity in regard to the curriculum in the state compulsory school system. As this is altered so the situation in the pre-primary sector may change. It is reported that parents are more active in the play group and day-centres for the under-3's. A national foundation (Education-Information) has six district offices which encourage new approaches in parent education.

Contact with - and involvement of - parents appears to be at about the same level in Finland as in most other countries. The usual means of contact - casual, at the arrival and departure times of the children; evening or weekend discussion meetings; individual consultation by appointment - are in general use, with the equally usual result that those parents with whom the staff most wish to make closer contact are the hardest to reach. Some experimental radio and television programmes have been developed (principally through the University of Jyväskyla's institutes of psychology and of education) and the response is described as encouraging. Only a very few secondary schools have experimented with 'parenthood' courses.

As might be expected from the unusual structure of provision in New Zealand, the part played there by parents is, to say the least, very substantial. The two main pre-primary services, kindergarten and playcentre, involve parents in administration at all levels from local to national. Parents play a large part in the establishment and maintenance of centres, and many voluntarily undertake education programmes. Those who enrol their children in kindergartens are involved at once in pre-entry classes and are encouraged to join parent clubs and to offer themselves for service on the kindergarten committees. Many serve as parent-helpers in the kindergartens during normal daily sessions.

Parent (or more accurately mother) participation is basic to both the philosophy and the actual operations of the playcentres, since with rare exceptions it is a pre-condition for their own children's attendance that they must be prepared to work in and for the playcentre. A number of local playcentre associations award 'parent helper' certificates to parents and others - such as senior secondary school pupils who may undertake the courses - meeting the requirements of this role. These include observing, recording and commenting on children's play and development, and practical work with the children in the playcentre. The Association has produced a large and comprehensive range of parent education literature. The Department of Education is producing a correspondence course on child development and on aspects of early childhood care and education. This is intended to be suitable for playcentre and child-care trainee staff, and it is thought likely that many parents will enrol for the course. The Department has also set up a representative committee to promote, co-ordinate and advise on the publication of suitable material and information for the parents of young children.

The seven countries thus provide examples across a very wide spectrum of activity and innovation in this field. It will however be necessary to examine later the more qualitative aspects, in relation to a variety of objectives which can be seen as potentially important in giving meaning to the inherently rather diffuse concepts of parent involvement and parent education. The USA report (par. 131) has this to say:

> "Parent participation in the sense of parents visiting programmes, programmes, special events for parents, and/or traditional parent-teacher organisations is quite general. There are also local parent committees, cooperatives, etc. in various places. However parent participation in the sense of full parent control of publicly-sponsored child-care programmes, extensive parent involvement in policy making and programme development, or considerable employment of relatively-un-educated parents as paid staff (as in the instance of Headstart in the USA) is found only in the USA and Yugoslavia."

Provision and co-ordination of ancillary services - It must be stated right away that the principal value of seeking information on this topic has lain in the negative evidence of scarcity and lack of co-ordination. So much is this the case that no meaningful attempt can be made to present reasonably comparable country-by-country statements as in previous sections of this chapter.

Health services for the pre-primary age group are in general regarded as something to be dealt with by the parents even when the child is in regular attendance at a kindergarten or day-care centre on a full-time basis. It is usual for children to be medically examined

on first admission, and periodic inspections by physicians or by nurses are sometimes carried out on a similar basis to that customary for primary schools. In Switzerland many crèches and kindergartens have a permanent arrangement with a paediatrician who makes regular visits and is available in case of emergency.

In New Zealand a free dental service is provided for all children from 2 1/2 years at clinics held in primary schools, and audiovisual screening is carried out at 4 years, on entry to primary school, and again later.

Under the 1973 Child Day-care Act the Finnish system provides for regular examination and visits by nurses and doctors to all day-homes. The services of the Child Guidance Centres are available at the request of day-home supervisors or of the parents to provide psychological services; a few of these centres have taken the initiative in setting up routine visits to day-homes in their areas. This child guidance service is administered directly by the National Board of Social Welfare; it deals with the local communities, encourages them to take the initiative in setting up clinics and employing staff, and authorises a subsidy (30-80%, according to the economic circumstances of the community). In 1975 there were 59 child guidance centres in Finland, employing about 150 psychologists, 135 social workers, and 17 full-time child psychiatrists (plus other part-time).

There is at present little evidence in these countries of serious attempts to integrate care, education, medical, dental, psychological and other ancillary services for pre-primary children on an institutional basis. In several countries the question clearly came as a surprise, while in others the authorities consider 'integration' to be largely a matter of having representatives of other services on local and national committees. This might fairly be described as a first step in the direction of 'co-ordination', which may well be a better term for use when considering the actual and possible administrative relationship between ECCE and other services.

Policy - Unlike all six other countries in this study, Austria's policy for the provision of early childhood care and education in institutional terms may be stated succinctly in one sentence: "As many crèches as necessary, as few as possible; as many half-day kindergartens as possible, as many full-day ones as necessary". This appears to be a pragmatic response to the realities of the Austrian scene, where almost all the children in the small number of existing crèches are there because their mothers are working; and the majority of the crèches are to be found in the few industrialised centres of the country. Similarly, one can aim for full national coverage for the over-threes in half-day kindergartens when there are reasonable grounds for estimating that the demand for full-day care will continue to be concentrated in the same few industrial centres. Behind all this, however, lies a judgment that in the country at large women will continue to stay

at home - or to work part-time or seasonally - provided the half-day kindergarten is there to complement their rôle, and incidentally to afford them some welcome lightening of the tasks involved. There is also the possibility that potential demand for more full-day care is expected to remain latent because it will continue to be met - satisfactory to the parents - by relatives or by resort to neighbours prepared to act as childminders.

The policy situation in Germany is very different and still open. Even the 1973 General Plan for Education, well on the way to implementation (at least in terms of national averages) for kindergarten provision, left open for discussion and later decision the 'question of the 5-year-olds' : should they stay in kindergarten, or go to 'preschool classes' in the primary school? The latest verdict of the Deutsche Bildungsrat (German Education Council) in 1975 is that these children should attend the first grade of a proposed 'entry phase' lasting two years. During this phase, no selection would occur, no marks awarded - and starting-times should be flexible. Stress should be placed on social learning in manageable group and school sizes, giving more time for individual activity and less for teacher-centred instruction. This two-year phase should be followed by a second phase, of three years' duration. The Bund-Länder Kommission has not yet reached an agreed decision on these proposals, partly because it has been awaiting the outcome of various 'model investigations' - but also for practical and economic reasons which arise from the widely varying existing provision of kindergartens across the Länder. It is generally considered likely that some Länder will adopt the new phased scheme, that others will keep 5-year-olds in kindergartens (with 100% provision) and that still others will utilise both solutions in different circumstances.

For the 0-3 age-group no national policy has been formulated, not least because the need for provision is perceived in the Länder in fairly close correlation with the political spectrum. In Bavaria, for instance, there is effectively no interest in providing crèches, whereas Berlin plans provision for 25% of the 0-3 age-group. The Federal Ministry of Social Welfare has sponsored a 'model investigation', in twelve places, of a 'day-mother' (family day-care) scheme. The cost has been shared equally by the Federal government, the Länder governments involved, and the person, municipality or organisation operating the scheme locally.

So far as Switzerland is concerned, one must take note of trends, since a national policy is constitutionally impossible. Despite a few instances to the contrary, it appears to be generally the case that popular demand for full-day care continues to be low, reflecting a high degree of consensus on the importance of the family. The notable exception seems to be Geneva, where the provision of crèches and 'pouponnières' (mostly subsidised) has continued to increase, and also where a new scheme of voluntary downward extension of primary school

has been developed. Under this scheme, the first year at 'l'école enfantine' (4 years) serves 'the process of socialisation'; then (at 5) follows a year of 'pre-formal learning', and (at 6) compulsory schooling, with 'formal learning'. At 7 comes the 'year of consolidation', and only at 8 years will the class change to a new teacher (whose training will have been somewhat different). This scheme is due to be fully implemented (complete with new teaching materials) by 1982.

It is apparent that in all three federal countries there is as yet no indication of a more positive policy towards provision for the under-threes. Despite the obvious national differences in other respects, this seems to be associated with a persisting view that most of these children should be at home in the care of their mothers, so that the provision of day-care facilities need only be on a scale made essential by obvious need (as in the case of single parents, for example).

In contrast, however, is the equally positive policy of expanding kindergartens for the over-threes on a sessional or full school-day basis, with some awareness of need to provide (on local initiative) the additional cover for lunch-time and before and after school hours.

Turning now to the policy in the four non-federal countries, Denmark is in the throes of a national re-appraisal of ECCE service requirements. In the course of much public debate it was generally agreed that such provision is both necessary and desirable, but also that it has become expensive in relation to the overall national budget. Up to now, more than 2,000 half-day pre-school classes for the 5's and 6's have been provided (mostly in municipal schools) under the provisions of the 1966 amendment to the Education Act; the responsibility for subsidy and surveillance of all other forms of pre-primary day care and education has rested with the Ministry for Social Welfare. In financial terms, about three-quarters of the cost (national average) is borne by the state and municipalities, the remainder by parents. If the total income of parents is below a specified limit no fees are paid, and up to a higher income limit part fees are charged. In March 1975 the Danish Parliament refused to alter these limits upward to take account of inflationary increases in incomes, thus effectively lowering them. It is estimated that by April 1976 the number of persons employed as staff in day nurseries and kindergartens will have dropped by over two thousand. This has been achieved mainly by closing all centres on Saturdays, while maintaining the total working hours per week, but also by stricter adherence to the 1 : 1 trained/untrained staff ratio. This is evidenced by the fact that more than two-thirds of the total reduction is in untrained staff.

A 'pre-school commission' has been set up by the Minister for Social Welfare to study the ECCE field from various aspects. These are represented in the titles of the commission's four committees: family policy, early prevention, physical milieu, institutional and family day care. Membership of these committees will include, in addition to the nominees of Social Welfare, persons from all the

other appropriate ministries. Education will be represented on all four. It is of more than historical interest that the idea for such a commission originated with the Danish members of a Nordic Council committee on problems of transition from pre-primary to primary provision; and also that the recommendation was not pursued during the 'active welfare' period which preceded the recent economic recession. Here one should note the view that in the context of a still strong family tradition most mothers would prefer half-time employment. This was rarely available during an era of full employment, and now many mothers formerly employed full-time are unemployed. The figure of 50% of mothers of children 0-6 years in 1973 who were employed is certainly now lower.

For the period 1975-1980 the Danish Ministry of Social Welfare anticipates a nearly threefold increase in the number of places provided by the recently-introduced 'integrated centres' (cf. p. 19). This compares with expected increases of only 24 and 15% respectively for family day-care and day-care centre places. A late 1975 survey in Aarhus indicated that parents there preferred a supervised family day care system to day-care centres.

As was made clear in the section on supply, the nursery school (kindergarten) policy of the Netherlands has already resulted in a near-total coverage for the 4's and 5's. In 1848 a provision was included in the constitution laying down that education should be free. This has applied to both 'public' (state or municipal) and 'private' schools, and since 1917 expenditure has been based on the formal and material equality of the two types of school. The term 'expenditure' covers the complete maintenance from state funds in accordance with rules set out in the relevant Acts - in the present case the Nursery Education Act 1956.

In the public sector the State provides the municipalities every year with funds to cover the following items:

a) obligatory staff salaries after deduction of the school fees levied by the municipality;
b) the erection and initial fitting out, the extension, alteration, restoration and general maintenance, insurance and renting of the school buildings and purchase of development materials, teaching aids and school requisites that are not replacements. Standard sums are fixed per classroom, bearing in mind the year in which the school was founded, the type of municipality and other factors;
c) the maintenance, lighting, heating and cleaning of school buildings, expressed as a standard rate per classroom;
d) the maintenance and replacement of school furniture, development materials, teaching aids and school requisites and other expenditure incurred to ensure the smooth running of the school, expressed as a sum per pupil.

In the private sector the State pays direct to the school boards annually funds to cover the expenditure specified in a) above.

The municipalities pay the boards of private schools, on request, funds to cover the expenditure specified in b), if the relevant requirements have been met. In addition the municipalities pay the school boards annually the appropriate standard sums to cover the expenditure specified in c) and d). The Government reimburses annually the funds paid to the school boards by the municipalities. If any public nursery school employs more teachers than the obligatory number whose remuneration is reimbursed by the State, the boards of private schools in the same municipality are entitled to payment from municipal funds of the salaries of a number of teachers proportionate to the "extra" teachers at the public nursery school. In both public and private sectors the standard rates per child referred to in d) may be raised if special circumstances in the school make them insufficient. It is likely that the very small standard fee of four guilders per month payable by parents will be abolished in 1975.

Since 1971 children reaching 6 years of age between 1st January and 30th April must go to primary school in August of that year; those with birthdays between 1st May and 30th September may go, and all others must wait until the following year.

By a 1975 technical amendment to the Nursery School Act, children who will reach four years of age by 1st October may enter nursery school at the beginning of the school year in the preceding mid-August. There is at present no intention to advocate a lowering of the admission age from four to three years.

A research-monitored large-scale trial is currently under way into the development of an 'integrated' nursery-primary school course, to run from 4-12 years of age. In connection with this, a report is under consideration by the Minister in which the recommendation is made that teacher training colleges for nursery and primary education be gradually integrated. These colleges would provide students with a common first year, followed by a choice between curricula for work with the 4-8's or with the 8-12's.

About 500 nursery schools (and also primary schools) get additional teachers under the Ministry's scheme for positive discrimination, for which 65 million guilders a year have been allocated. This is based on the UK Plowden recommendations, but the 'most needy schools' are selected in terms solely of parents' occupation, and subject then to the advice of the inspectorate. There are also five integrated projects (involving co-operation with the Ministry of Social Work) which will also involve both nursery and primary schools.

In Finland the basis for current policy is the Child Day Care Act of April 1973: this provides a general goal and some essential principles, and the detailed implementation is still being developed. In mid-1975 it was estimated that so far as provision is concerned there are 150,000 additional places to be provided: the current target is 77,000 day-home

35

places (full and part-day) plus 21,000 places in community-based family day-care. This represents an approximately 50% increase over the 1974 figures.

The aim of the Act is to make day-care available to all needing such service, and to ensure that the service is of such a quality as to promote the child's development both emotionally and intellectually. The basic philosophy seeks to promote social, educational, regional and cultural equality by using day-care to complement home upbringing. The Act presupposes a variety of forms of day-care and ultimately a choice between them. At present the available forms are day-homes - the old distinction between crèches and kindergartens has been abandoned - family day-care - community-based or private, but both kinds supervised - and play-groups, both indoor and outdoor. The explicit purpose of using the single terms 'day-care' and 'day-homes' is to assure the application of a continuity of pedagogical philosophy from 0-6 years. The major current policy issue concerns the choice between adding a tenth year at the top of the school system or by lowering the school-entry age from seven years to six. At present it seems likely that the latter option stands a marginally better chance, but that economic considerations are likely to prove decisive. Meanwhile the planning emphasis is on developing receptiveness to the idea of school entry at 6 years via a pre-school class, on experimental activities, and on co-ordinating the education of six-year-olds with other areas of pre-primary provisions now under the control of Social Welfare.

The Ministry of Education has been studying a 1974 report from a special committee on staff training. This recommends uniform training for all personnel responsible for children in the age-range 0-6 years inclusive. Implementation would increase costs considerably, but a start has been made by providing one-year in-service courses at kindergarten training colleges for children's nurses with a good deal of day-home experience. Meanwhile the estimated shortage of teachers for day-homes is about 1,000, and three new (university-attached) training centres were opened in 1975.

Policy in New Zealand is largely based on the 1971 report of the Committee of Enquiry into Pre-school Education (the Hill Committee). Most of its recommendations have been, or are in process of being, implemented. Emphasis in the 1974 report of the Educational Development Council was placed on the need for educational provisions in the growing number of child-care centres; and for parent education, articulation of pre-primary services with those of the primary school, and assistance to communities finding it difficult to make initiatives in pre-primary work. Present policy is to fulfil the intention of the Hill Report, "that pre-school services be expanded until they are ultimately available to all who wish them"; and both the main political parties have emphasised their support for this policy. It must however be noted that only a very small proportion of the total provision in New Zealand is of full-day care and education: current policy does not

indicate any early intention of changing this balance, but recent widespread public discussion may yet lead to a re-appraisal.

Looking across the current policy of the four non-federal countries, one is struck by two main points: the contrast in approach to the full-day care question between Denmark and Finland on the one hand, and the Netherlands and New Zealand on the other; and the possibility that Finland may find itself at some point facing similar problems to those now exercising Danish policy-makers. Institutional provision of full-day care is expensive: how expensive is largely a matter of standards. This is clearly a topic to which we must return in this report.

The USA nine-country report does not have a separate section on official policy, but notes and comments upon what are described as "the major objectives listed for day-care and for kindergarten". All nine countries give priority as day-care objectives to "care for children while mothers work" and to "care for and protect children when parents are unable to do so". Seven countries add "to compensate for various forms of economic, social, and cultural deprivation" - and the remaining two include this as an objective for kindergarten services. Canada, Poland, Sweden and the USA include "maximising women's options." For the kindergartens, objectives are preparation for formal education, enhancement of cognitive and social development, compensation for various forms of deprivation, and care for children while mothers work.

The editors note (para. 126) that "explicit statements of these objectives for all (nine) countries may be found in either child-care legislation (social welfare, health, education) or official statements of Government policy. These objectives are confirmed in the criteria defining eligibility for the programmes and in the definitions of priority categories when provision is limited". Elsewhere (paras. 87-89) they make the following observations on the question of 'eligibility':

Eligibility for most day-care programmes is contingent on social or presumptive need. Where resources are in short supply, children of working mothers (especially low-income and single parents) and full-day students or children from inadequate and deprived families are given preference. In one country, Sweden, children with handicaps (mental, physical, emotional) are also designated for priority in assignment of scarce places. Pre-school programmes, where available, set eligibility in terms of child's age, social maturity, and parental preference. Where places are limited priorities are as specific as are specified for day care.

An overview

In attempting an overall evaluation of the current scene as portrayed by the data on selected countries, recourse must be had to simplification.

We shall therefore approach quantity and quality (provision and standards) by way of objectives and methods (policy and structure). In so doing, the opportunity will be taken to utilise additional information from other sources where appropriate.

Objectives and methods - By and large, the generalisations about the objectives of the countries covered by the US report can be extended to all fifteen: the priorities among those objectives undoubtedly vary, but the variation is not always made explicit. The major distinction is between the objectives relating to children between birth and 2 1/2 or 3 years of age, and those for the older pre-primary children up to compulsory school ages which range from 5 to 7 years across the countries surveyed. Policy in respect of the younger group, while primarily in terms of care, is highly variable in terms of reasons why that care should be made available. In some countries the main objective is that of maximising the choice of women between staying at home and going out to work, regardless of economic need or labour-market demand. In others it is to ensure the availability of women workers, while thus taking account of variations in economic need or other motivation. In still others - perhaps the majority - policy is based on meeting only those needs which arise fairly clearly from economic or social origins. It is probably fair comment to note that it is the needs of women that predominate where objectives for services at this age-level are concerned.

For the older group the objectives tend to be 'educational' in the broad sense, though without necessarily losing sight of those considered above. The variation across national policies must now be sought in terms of a spectrum, one end of which lies in a predominantly social interpretation of 'educational', while the other extreme is cognitive, even formal - preparation for compulsory schooling. It is therefore not surprising that in many countries the objectives for nursery school or kindergarten provision include that of 'compensation' for presumed 'deprivation', whereas only in one or two countries is this the case for under-threes provision.

It is evident that, for both age-groups, objectives are identified and priorities among them determined by political perceptions of socially dominant values in each country. Where the country has a federal constitutional structure, those values can and do vary widely from one state or province to another - and in the extreme case of Switzerland right down to almost local level. In the other federal countries for which data have been available here, there is evidence of considerable variation in the amount of internal value differences and in the extent to which the central governments have been constitutionally able to influence ECCE policy. But there are certain parallels in non-federal countries which it would be unwise to overlook. It is certainly the case that in some countries the nature and extent of devolution from central to local government is such as to render uncertain the translation

into action of what originated as national policy, while in others the very opposite appears to be the case.

When one turns, against this background, to the ways in which different countries seek to implement ECCE policy in pursuit of national, regional or local objectives, there seem fortunately to be a limited number of structural models in current use. Since at national level there is generally more constitutional freedom to change, it is important to describe these models fully and clearly.

The first model involves a division of responsibility between ministries which is based on age, though there may be some overlap. Usually the age-group from birth (or 6 weeks, or 6 months) to 2 1/2 or 3 years is the responsibility of a ministry of health and/or social welfare: the older group - up to compulsory school age - comes under the ministry of education (and/or science, culture). In both sectors both part-time and full-time provision will be found: the former may be part-time or sessional (e.g. two days per week) and the latter may in fact be only the full school day, with or without provision for average before and after school hours and during lunchtime. Examples of this model are Austria, France, the Netherlands, Poland and Yugoslavia.

The second model also divides the responsibility between ministries, but this time on a functional rather than a predominant age-basis. In this, the ministry of health and/or social welfare is responsible for full day care from birth (or soon after) to compulsory school age, and the ministry of education for part-time, sessional or full school-day provision in nursery school or kindergarten for the age-group from about two or three years to compulsory school age. It is thus a partially dual system in parallel. The examples of this model are the UK and New Zealand.

The third model is unitary: one ministry is responsible for all ECCE from birth to compulsory school age. In the fifteen countries considered here, two - Finland and Sweden - provide examples of this model in its pure form: no distinction is made between provision of 'care' and of 'education' at any age, and close co-operation between ministries of health, welfare and education is provided for under the relevant law, even though for cabinet and administrative convenience the overall responsibility is entrusted to one ministry (that of health and social welfare). Denmark provides a third example, but there the ministry of education is responsible for the provision of half-day 'pre-school classes' for children in the 5-6 years age-group. Most Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany have a single or 'unitary' system, in the sense that ministries of social welfare are responsible for the provision of kindergartens and also for any development of institutional or family-based day care for the under-threes.

Of the four remaining countries, three - all federal (Canada, Switzerland, USA) - present a mixture of models, while Israel is a special case, involving three ministries. Canada and the USA rely

heavily on private and voluntary-body sponsorship, Israël and Switzerland to a lesser extent, but all four to a much greater extent that in the other eleven countries.

Provision and standards - In this as in other contexts there tends to be an inverse relationship between quantity and quality so long as there is some early limit to expenditure. Both the setting of that limit and the relative weight given to quantity and quality are policy matters, in this case to be decided usually at cabinet level.

No country in the fifteen under review is reported as being even reasonably satisfied with both the quantity and the quality of provision. One country (Denmark) that is generally regarded as having achieved a relatively high level in both respects is currently reviewing its policy, at least partly for economic reasons. Another (France) which has a remarkable quantitative achievement to its credit is not so happy about the qualitative aspect, with staff/children ratios of about 1 : 40 in its écoles maternelles for the 2-5 age group. Sweden is reported as having difficulty in achieving its targets for trained nursery-school teachers in its unitary system. In the Netherlands the contrast is apparent both quantitatively and qualitatively between crèche provision for the under-fours and kindergarten provision for the 4-6 age group. The United Kingdom's expansion policy for nursery classes faces serious problems of economic origin, while full-day ECCE provision for the children of working mothers is inadequate both quantitatively and qualitatively.

It is not surprising therefore that the authorities in many countries are beginning to face what might be called 'second generation problems'. By this one means that the necessity has arisen to re-consider policy and structure in the light of the experience now available concerning the quantity-quality issue. This necessity has been accorded greater urgency by the effects of widespread economic recession: when inflation and/or unemployment rates are high solutions cannot be found by putting more public funds into the ECCE purse. Those countries, among which are to be found several OECD Member countries not here reviewed, which are still 'first generation' are naturally hoping to benefit from the experience of others which have 'gone before'. It is clearly an opportune moment to take stock, to identify the major problems, to see what evidence is needed but not available to solve them.

III

ISSUES AND OPTIONS

The problem of context

Almost any topic on which political decisions must be made is likely - as a rule or under certain circumstances - to be emotive. That of early childhood care and education tends to generate more heat than light whenever it comes up for discussion. There are at least two reasons for this: first, the importance attached in human societies to the various family patterns and child-rearing practices they have evolved, and second, the remarkably scant amount of objective evidence available concerning the differential long-term effects of various childhood experiences. The former carries the emotional overtones of personal experience and philosophy, the latter those of assertion and counter-assertion based on intuitive judgement. Even when no policy decision is at stake, people can and do speak with passionate conviction and obvious sincerity. It is therefore perhaps unsurprising that the passion may be much in evidence at times when calm debate is most needed. Bearing this in mind let us examine the context within which, and the process by which, ECCE policy is considered, shaped and implemented.

Broadly the context is the prevailing social philosophy at any given time in the political unit - municipality, state, country - where the relevant executive power is vested constitutionally. As we have seen, this can preclude a 'national' policy or make it uncertain to what extent such a policy will be implemented. In many countries the 'central' influence will be primarily through subsidy; sometimes - as until recently in Denmark, for example - this is specific and carries with it standards and a mechanism for these to be controlled. The new system in Denmark - a 50 per cent across-the-board subsidy to local authorities for all social services - leaves the decision about the ECCE share to the local level. It remains to be seen what happens to existing national standards of provision when local authorities are faced with the quantity-quality problem. At the other end of this national-local spectrum we have examples of countries where the control is vested in a central ministry or ministries, decisions about ECCE provisions are national and implementation takes place through regional and/or local departmental organisation. Standards are prescribed nationally and, with varying degrees of rigour, controlled locally by an inspectorate. This model is well exemplified by the case of France.

41

Since this variation in the roles of central and local government can and does obviously apply to other public services - health, education and social welfare are but three examples - it is important to remind ourselves of the distinctive features of early childhood provision. First, there is no compulsory element as in the case of education services within the statutory age limits. Second, there is no obvious general need as in the case of health services. Third, there is nc direct need connexion with individual and familial socio-economic level as in the case of most social welfare services. ECCE may consequently be treated as an extra, something that should be provided by voluntary effort on the part of those who want it. Despite the fact that, as we have seen, many countries have in legislative and fiscal terms moved beyond this outlook, there can be no doubting its survival as a factor in debates on policy.

ECCE policy formation is therefore peculiarly vulnerable to arguments for and against increased or better-quality provision which are based more on value-judgements than on factual information. Such value-judgements may be supported by facts or estimates, but the selective or incomplete nature of this support is frequently both obvious and difficult to remedy. As has been noted earlier, this observation applies with particular force to estimates of demand for ECCE services. So in most countries in recent years the process of decision-making has tended to be one in which questions of social philosophy have predominated to an extent even greater than is usually the case in the 'human services' field of health, education and welfare as a whole. At this point it may be useful to move from these abstractions to a recent concrete example.

A case study

In February 1973 the Australian Minister for Education set up the Australian Pre-Schools Committee with the following terms of reference* :

> To examine and make recommendations to the Minister for Education as to the measures the Commonwealth Government should adopt to ensure that in the States, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territories:
>
> a) the objective is achieved over a period of approximately six years that all children are given an opportunity to undertake a year of pre-school education;
> b) child-care centres for children below school age are established to meet the needs of children of working parents and underprivileged families.

* Care and Education of Young Children. Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra 1974.

The terms of reference went on to stress, inter alia, that the Committee should:

- Give priority to the establishment of facilities in areas where the need was greatest;
- bear in mind the intention that the level of provision of pre-school education within Australia should be comparable to that now applying in the Australian Capital Territory.

When the Committee reported nine months later its major recommendations were summarised as follows:

a) Pre-school education and day care to be provided as an integrated early childhood service, directed initially towards sessional pre-school services for 70% of children in the one-year age group before school, and towards day-care services for 10% of children under school age.

b) Pre-school and day-care services to be community-based and designed to meet the needs of children and their families in specific areas;

c) The opportunity to undertake one year of pre-school education to be provided for all children including isolated, handicapped and other special-need groups, by whatever means are most appropriate;

d) Sessional pre-school to be funded for the most part on the Canberra pattern of three groups of children for three half-day sessions a week, with some extended services for children in special need.

e) Day care to be provided in day-care centres or in family day-care systems; family day care to be organised and coordinated within an area, with home mothers being selected by trained staff and assisted by them on a regular basis.

f) Pre-school and day-care services to be provided by professional and sub-professional staff qualified to work in the integrated service. Such staff are to be assisted by aides.

The Committee put forward standards for staff training, physical space, group and unit sizes, and staffing ratios. In its short statement of basic assumptions (pp. 21-23) it noted that:

> Young children are dependent for emotional security on a limited number of adults, of whom the mother (or an acceptable substitute) is usually the most important. These adults must be able to provide continuity of affection, consistency of acceptance, and adequate and appropriate stimulation.

It went on to state explicitly that the assumption just quoted

> ... provides the basis for recommendations concerning the quantity and quality of staff in both pre-school and day-care centres, and for the size of groups and total enrolments. In particular it governs the Committee's insistence on high staff-child ratios and small groups for the very youngest

children, and on high training standards for those in charge of them. Contrary to widespread popular belief, the Committee is unanimous and emphatic in seeing the needs of very young children as requiring more - not less - training and higher - not lower - quality of staff, as compared with older children. The Committee is concerned to dispel the myth that the day care needs of very young children can be met adequately by merely warm-hearted people who are fond of children.

We are not at this point concerned with the substance of the Committee's recommendations or with the basis for them, but rather with the light which the reception of that report can throw upon the policy-forming process in the early childhood field. In particular we are interested in the impact of the social philosophy current at a particular time in a particular country, the weight given to various categories of argument, and the key issues upon which controversy is focused.

The official response was described in a previous CERI report* in the following terms:

> The immediate reaction of the Australian Government to this report has been decidedly negative, though it was warmly supported by the Minister for Education himself. It appeared that there (was) a strong current of feeling within the Cabinet that the Committee has over-emphasised the educational provisions - and particularly the pre-school provisions - when emphasis might more appropriately have been given to child-care services, with very minimal professional support, and primarily in the context of welfare services.

On 30th July, 1974 the report of the Australian Government's "Priorities Review Staff" was tabled in Parliament. In its comments on the Pre-schools Committee Report the following appears:

> Government priorities suggest that the emphasis in a pre-school and child care programme should be on helping the needy families first. This points to families with particular disabilities, and to women and children from families with low incomes, where the woman wishes to participate or already participates in the work-force. This suggests that the emphasis in the programme should not be on sessional pre-schooling used mainly by the middle class and children of non-working women, but on much improved day care, associated with pre-school services if possible, so that major impact is felt in low-income families.
>
> The level of child-care services recommended in the Pre-school Committee Report, of 10% of children under school age using care facilities by 1985, seems grossly inadequate in the light of increasing participation rates of mothers of young children in the

* Developments in Early Childhood Education, CERI/OECD, Paris 1975, p. 70.

workforce, and of changing attitudes in the wider society towards sex roles, equality of opportunity and the needs of young children. The report seemed unnecessarily concerned with the professionalisation of staff in pre-school and child-care centres. The time required for training pre-school teachers should not be accepted as a constraint on the implementation of good child care services.

In its comments on a separate report prepared by the Social Welfare Commission at the request of the Government, the Priorities Review Staff document had this to say (inter alia):

> The key aspect of the SWC report is its scheme for allocating funds to local government areas on a basis of priority of needs. These funds would be available for allocation to projects sponsored by community groups, government agencies, etc., in each area ..
>
> The SWC report overcomes many of the deficiencies of the Preschool Committee Report by leaving the question of choice between formal and informal pre-school and day-care, play groups, institutionalised day care, family day care, sessional pre-school and so on, largely open to expression of preference by the local community ... the SWC recommendations acknowledge the need for some degree of specialisation and for standards, without going overboard in these areas.

On the question of programme administration, the Priorities Review Staff noted that the Pre-school Committee Report had recommended establishment of a permanent Australian Pre-schools Commission, responsible to the Minister for Education; and that the Social Welfare Commission report had recommended an Advisory Board responsible to the Minister for Social Security. Having observed that both proposals were inconsistent with the principle of avoiding domination by a particular vested interest, the PRS statement advised the Australian Government:

> .... to establish a Children's Bureau as an Interim Commission .... (which) would report to the Minister responsible for coordination and administration of early childhood services, and through him to other Ministries with specific responsibilities in this field.

The Government accepted this piece of advice and in September 1974 set up an Interim Committee to act during the preparation and passage of legislation to establish a Children's Commission, to be responsible to "the Minister assisting the Prime Minister in Child Care Matters." The Children's Commission came into being in June 1975, its main function under the Act* being

* The Children's Commission Act, 1975. Canberra: The Government Printer, June 1975.

.... to ascertain the needs of the Australian community for services for children and to make recommendations to the Minister in respect of those needs ....

The expression "services for children" was interpreted by the Act as including

a) the care of pre-school aged children at a time or times of the day when they are not being cared for in their own homes;
b) the education of pre-school aged children;
c) the care of children other than pre-school aged children at a time or times of the day when they are not being provided with an educational service and are not being cared for in their own homes.

Other clauses provided for assistance to working parents in the care of their sick children; parent education; and the care of physically or mentally handicapped children. Elsewhere in the Act the Commission was, inter alia, enjoined to ensure "that services for children provided in Australia are of an adequate standard."

Let us now pursue the intention to see what light this recent exercise in a Member country can throw upon the policy-forming process in the ECCE field. First, it is apparent that the politically effective climate in which the original expert committee report was delivered was one in which a social welfare philosophy was predominant. This coincided with the rise of an active and articulate movement for women's rights, and with a pent-up sense of urgency to 'get things done'. Second, the word 'education' evoked in most adults an image of formality, discipline and routine which they would not wish to see extended to children of pre-school age. Third, greater weight was given to arguments based on the 'folk-wisdom' about the care of very young children than to those of experts who could be seen as having a professional bias. Fourth, the Government dealt with the locus of ministerial responsibility question by adopting a structural solution - the Children's Commission - which despite its positive features might not in other circumstances have stood much chance of serious consideration.

The key issues

And on what key issues was controversy focused? On a sub-set of those with which we have become familiar in surveying the current international scene since 1973:

- the connotation and significance of the terms 'care' and 'education' when used in relation to the years between birth and compulsory school age at 5 to 7 years;
- the implications for the development of young children of daily care and education provided elsewhere than in the [illegible]wn homes, by one or a number of other adults, in the company of other children of their own or varying ages;

- the need for, and the nature and duration of, professional and sub-professional training for those entrusted with the care and education of young children;
- the desirability and feasibility of involving parents and the local community in the choice, planning, staffing and operation of ECCE services;
- the relationship between ECCE provisions and the philosophy, curriculum and methods of the compulsory primary school;
- the appropriate locus of government responsibility in respect of early childhood services, and the extent and mechanisms of integration or co-ordination.

We turn now to an examination of these issues, one objective being the identification of areas of ignorance requiring exploration if decision-making is to be placed on a more rational basis than is possible at present.

'Care' and 'education' - at least so far as the English language is concerned, the term 'care' has traditionally involved the notions of 'charge', 'oversight', of 'looking after', of 'watching over'. More recently the evolution of the social work profession from its origins in 'charitable' activity has given rise to the term 'caring professions', in which 'care' has acquired the connotation of 'concerned assistance, advice and support'. In the context of early childhood it is apparent that the traditional and recent connotations tend to merge: 'day care' or 'child care' can imply something relatively passive or custodial, but also something relatively active or nurturant - and any blend of the two.

As we have noted in the Australian case study, the term 'education' has a tendency to mean for most people whatever they have personally experienced under that name. This is probably a social fact which most educationists and intellectually-trained people overlook when speaking or writing about education. As a result, it can be genuinely difficult for many politicians and administrators to free themselves from subjective reactions to the word, or to convey a broader and more objective connotation to other. This problem is intensified when one refers to 'pre-school education' or 'nursery education' - and re-doubled when such concepts are linked or contrasted with 'day-care' or 'child' care.

It now becomes easier to understand why in some countries the term 'pre-school' has been restricted in its application to the year prior to compulsory schooling; and also why the integrated ECCE systems in Finland and Sweden have applied the terms 'day care' and 'child care' generically, avoiding the use of the term 'education'. It should of course be noted in passing that primary and secondary schools have a 'care' function in addition to their 'education' one; and it is within living memory that universities were regarded as 'in loco parentis' to their students.

At the risk - a considerable one - of oversimplification, one can characterise the 'educational' philosophy and methods of the kindergarten/nursery school approach as being relatively non-didactic: even in the more 'structured' versions the imparting of factual knowledge is not a main objective. In other words, trained nursery teachers do not 'teach' in the sense still widely employed by the general public. Instead, they endeavour to use the young child's characteristically purposeful activity which adults call 'play' as one means for widening and enriching his or her experience of, and interaction with, both natural and man-made phenomenon. But they do 'teach' in the important sense of encouraging the development of both physical and intellectual skills, and they do structure the situation to favour the acquisition by the child of a personal identity within a cooperative relationship with other children and with adults.

Given the physical and psychological dependency of children in the first five to seven years of life, such an 'educational' activity must of necessity involve a 'caring' one - in both its custodial and nurturant connotations. But it is obvious that the reverse is not necessarily the case: it is perfectly possible for a 'caring' activity to be custodial and even nurturant without involving 'educational' activity of the kind described. This asymmetry effectively precludes a description of the relationship between care and education in early childhood as 'complementary'; but obviously it can be argued that both are necessary. This then becomes the nub of the matter, the very core of the controversy: as was the case in Australia, there are plenty of people ready to assert that educational activity in the institutional day-care situation is not necessary.

At this point it becomes necessary - a necessity all-too-often unnoticed or evaded - to consider what happens or fails to happen in the non-institutional 'day-care' situation of the home. Obviously this can and does offer the full spectrum of physical care from the extremes of grossly inadequate (or worse) to pampered, and that of emotional response from negative or cold to cloying sentimentality. Thus so far as 'caring' activity is concerned it is entirely legitimate to argue that some children would be better cared for in a day-care centre than they would be at home. The strength of this argument would then be partly dependent on the personal qualities of the centre's staff and on the number of children for whom each staff member is responsible at one time. It would however also depend on other factors to which we shall turn shortly.

Meanwhile, however, we must complete the picture by considering the possible variation in the nature and extent of 'educational' activity provided by the home situation. Once again the full spectra are available and it is consequently legitimate to argue that some children may be at least no worse-off 'educationally' in a day-care centre weak in its provision of educational activity than they would be at home. Such children would then be liable to benefit positively, other things being

equal, in proportion to any strengthening of the centre's educational' competence.

The effects of early experience - we may now pose the far-from-rhetorical question: what are the long-term effects on the young child's overall development of various patterns of care and education, at home and/or elsewhere, during the first few years of life? The short answer is that we do not know; the very long answer would involve a detailed evaluation of the relevant scientific literature with a view to justifying that statement. For the present purpose it must suffice to take note of a fair degree of consensus on some working hypotheses, as a practical response to the reasonable demands of those obliged to make decisions every day on inadequate or conflicting evidence. In the longer term it is however essential that resources become available for these hypotheses to be verified.

One example of a degree of consensus is to be found in the 'basic assumptions' of the Australian Pre-school Committee to which reference has already been made. For our present purpose the following are the most relevant (op. cit. p. 22):

- the experiences of the earliest years of life are probably more critical for satisfactory adult development than those of any other period;*
- play is the characteristic mode in which young children exercise their physical and cognitive resources, and learn to interact successfully with the material world and with other people, both children and adults;
- language is man's most important means of thought and communication, and the most rapid development of this skill occurs in the pre-school years;
- the value of pre-school education is dependent on close cooperation with the home and on continuity of methods and attitudes in the primary schools to which children proceed.

It is probable that these fairly general statements would find acceptance among the majority of developmental psychologists, and also that there would be almost universal support for the assumption quoted earlier (p. 43) concerning the dependence of very young children for emotional security on a "limited number of adults ... able to provide continuity of affection, consistency of acceptance, and adequate and appropriate stimulation". For example, a 1971 manual on early childhood methods in Kibbutzim** opens with the following:

* NOTE : This does not necessarily imply support for the view that within the early years there are 'critical periods' of development, by or within which the child should be exposed to certain learning experiences.

** Yona ben-Yaaker: "Methods of Kibbutz Collective Education during Early Childhood, in Marcus, J. (Ed.) Growing up in Groups, London, Gordon and Breach, 1972.

There are three principles which shape the 'children's house':

a) A permanent physical surrounding

b) Continuity of the work of the metapelet (child-care worker)

c) A social unit of 4 or 5 children.

On b) the text continues:

> Continuity of the metapelet for 3 1/2-4 years contributes to the development of the relationship between her and the child, and to the child's security in her and in the surroundings in which he is growing up ... The presence of a consistent personality and a consistent educational approach and behaviour help the child adjust to the surroundings and its demands ... one must also appreciate the contact which is formed between the permanent metapelet and the parents which allows for collaboration and mutual understanding in both thought and action regarding the child's education. This common understanding and sociable atmosphere contributes to the child's adaptation to reality.

Similarly, an East German expert noted* in relation to day-centres:

> The basic rules concerning the maintance of continuity in the relations between the child and his supervisors are still frequently violated ... Many matrons assign their staff anew every day to the tasks where they are most urgently needed, so that in the infants' sections in particular the nurses have no fixed responsibility for specific children.

It is however likely that the position taken by the Israeli writer would be regarded as somewhat extreme if applied outside a kibbutz situation. Within that special setting, however, the insistence on the permanence of the metapelet - and of her substitute as well - is based upon studies of adults who grew up in kibbutzim: these studies reported personality problems associated with experience of metapelet 'turn-over'. The observations of the East German expert lead us to consider the question of staff training and other related standards of ECCE provision.

So far as language development is concerned, evidence from recent short-term studies suggests that this proceeds more rapidly for very young children when they are in the care of adults who know and respond to their uniqueness and who converse with them frequently. Studies comparing later intellectual development in differing cultural and sub-cultural (social class) milieux have directed attention to the importance of the quality as well as the quantity of child-adult communication during the earliest phases of spoken language development. It is now generally agreed that more attention must be paid to the

* Schmidt-Kolmer, Eva: "Organization of living and educational conditions for infants and small children in children's institutions" in Care of Children in Day Centres, Geneva, WHO, 1964.

ways in which full development of reasoning ability may depend on the nature of these early linguistic encounters.

Standards of provision and staff training - Once again there seems to be a fair degree of consensus, allowing for some flexibility. For example, the maximum size of groups and the ratio of staff to children are both generally agreed to be age-related: the younger the children the smaller the absolute size of groups and the higher the staff/children ratio. The amount of space per child and the nature and quantity of large and small equipment are agreed to be important, and research is beginning to provide empirical support for this consensus. The need for staff training, and for a reasonable (e.g 1 : 1) ratio of trained staff to untrained or partially-trained assistants is based on assumption and on the consensus of experienced people in ways similar to those applicable to the care and education of older children. That is to suggest that the training standards applied by many professions are not based on substantially different or better evidence than is currently available in the ECCE field. This being the case, there can be seen to be some justification for regarding with suspicion the widely-held view that the training and qualifications of persons entrusted with the care of very young children need not be as extensive and intensive as is generally considered necessary where older children are concerned. They may need to be more so.

This said, the whole question of professional and sub-professional training in the ECCE field is overdue for reconsideration against the background of recent developments, both within individual countries and across the international scene. As in any such consideration, this should start with a detailed analysis of the work likely to be carried out by one or more categories of ECCE staff.

Such an analysis has probably been carried out by the working party on training set up by the authorities in Finland, and the outcome of the discussions there will be of great interest when it becomes available. For the present purpose we can note the main problems with which they are wrestling: should the traditionally separate roles of the kindergarten teacher and of the nursery nurse be combined into a new role of day-care worker? If this is considered desirable and feasible, what should be the content (both theoretical and practical) of the professional training curriculum? And for such a curriculum what should be the minimum entry requirements? Could these be met by a combination of relevant employment experience with a somewhat lower level of formal education?

If for reasons considered irrefutably strong it is decided that the traditional roles cannot be satisfactorily combined, attention will need to be directed to the relation between them: in some countries they require equivalent levels of education at entry to training and achieve parity of status, remuneration and conditions of service, while in other countries none of these considerations apply. At this point one must

recognise a further problem: if the 'combined role' is achieved, what will be the relationship between the professional 'day-care worker' and the primary school teacher in terms of status, etc. and how would this affect current attempts to ease the transition from pre-primary to primary provisions ?

Bearing in mind the high cost in both capital and recurrent expenditure of full-time professional training, attention should probably also be directed to the possibilities of in-service training already evidenced by the experience of the play-groups movement in several countries.

The 'training' of parents - From this it is but a step to the logically related question of preparation or education for parenthood. One says "logically-related" - but the logic has only recently been perceived by more than a few of those concerned administratively with early childhood care and education. It is possible that the breakthrough came with the wide publicity accorded to the principal positive findings from evaluation studies of Project Headstart in the USA. These showed that the programmes of which the effects 'held up' into the primary school were those involving home visiting and sustained interaction with the parents. These findings were reinforced by the success of Gordon* in using 'disadvantaged women' as parent educators of 'indigent mothers' of infants and young children in Florida, USA. In 1973, the Office of Education and the Office of Child Development (of the US Department of Health, Education and Welfare) launched the Education for Parenthood Project, to develop a comprehensive course of child development for students in school grades 7 to 12 (ages 14-19) in 500 school districts; to provide information and materials on parent education to schools and other groups; and to fund projects to be carried out by national youth-serving volunteer organisations. Early in 1976 it was announced that the Open University in the United Kingdom was launching two consecutive 8 week courses in 1977 via correspondence, radio and television. The stated objective of the courses is "to identify issues and problems and increase the knowledge of skills open to parents".

The new developments thus approach the question of 'better parenting' by both a preventive (preparation for parenthood) and a direct strategy. They both face problems of 'who shall educate' as well as those of materials and methods. But their advent signals a belated recognition of the fact that adequate ECCE provision must include the ECCE performance of the parents - that not only staff in day-care and nursery centres need to be provided with the appropriate competences to meet the needs of children in their earliest years.

Preparation or education for parenthood may well prove to be the most effective way of 'involving' parents in the planning and operation

* Gordon, Ira J: "Early child stimulation through parent education", in Readings in Research in Developmental Psychology, London; Scott, Foresman 1971.

of community-based ECCE provisions. As is universally found to be the case, direct attempts to involve parents fail to reach those whom ECCE staff would most like to see at the operation level; but the New Zealand experience has shown the extent to which parents are prepared to involve themselves in planning and administration as their understanding of ECCE principles - at home and in the kindergarten or playgroup - grows through their own training and experience as helpers.

At this point some reference can appropriately be made to the other part of the current CERI programme in the ECCE field to which reference was made in the Preface to this report. This involves the provision of a forum where leaders of experimental projects in a small number of Member countries can meet to discuss progress made and obstacles encountered, and to exchange views with representatives of a larger number of Member countries who are involved in policy-making and administration. The five projects concerned are:

a) The Queensland (Australia) pre-school correspondence project (PSCP) for children in remote sparsely-populated areas;
b) the pre-school project of the Deutsches Jugend-Institut (DJI);
c) the 'differentiated teaching(project for children in kindergarten and primary schools in the Netherlands (GEON);
d) the project on cooperation between pre-school and primary schools in the county of Västmanland in Sweden;
e) Project Developmental Continuity (PDC) in the USA: this is built directly on the Headstart programme and involves fifteen school-board areas.

To ensure some degree of comparability, these projects met at least two of the criteria for selection that i) they have policy-making implications; ii) they included some element of parent involvement; and iii) they address themselves in some way to the transition from pre-primary provisions to those of the compulsory school system. But - as was to be expected - the five projects vary widely in size, scope and rate of progress towards their target dates for completion. For our present purpose it will suffice to note ways in which progress in the projects can later be expected to illumine discussion on issues here identified as central.

All five projects recognise the importance of parental involvement but the terms of involvement vary. In the PSCP (Queensland), the parents using the correspondence materials in their own home become essentially teacher aides and perhaps, in some cases, even teachers. The parents are required to exercise choice among options within the materials since they are designed to contain more than a family can use. The teacher can help in this selection process but much of the responsibility rests with the parents. In addition, the manner in which the programme is used is determined by the parents. Some set aside rather formal time periods in the day to use the programme, others simply build programme activities into the child's regular play and other activities.

The Västmanland (Sweden) and the PDC (USA) projects both utilise parents as aides within the school to supplement the role of the teacher. In the case of the PDC project, the role of these parent-aides is extended to include home-school liaison. In the GEON (Netherlands) project, although parents are not used in the programme, substantial attempts have been made to provide them with information about the project.

Beyond the function of keeping parents informed and even of using them in the programme itself, both directly and as a bridge to other parents, there is provision in some of the projects for parent involvement in decision making. In the PSCP, although the parents are involved in some selection of options from among those provided in the material, they have had no role in the development of the materials or the determination of its content. Similarly, in the Västmanland project the choice of programme rests with the professional and, in this case, the emphasis is on getting the pre-school and primary school professionals to talk to one another.

In PDC the involvement of parents in the organising councils is a requirement of the centrally prescribed guide-lines and all centres are making genuine attempts to involve them in the decision processes. In almost all sites, one parent has been employed as a parent involvement coordinator, but many parents are still reluctant to go beyond the role of aide if involved formally or to see themselves as other than recipients of information from teachers if involved less formally. In fact, although the role may appear to be technically more demanding, parents seem both more willing and more able to serve as aides than to participate in the development of policy. Given their previous experiences and expectations of primary schools this is probably not surprising.

In an attempt to avoid the barriers often perceived by parents when their comments and judgements are sought in open discussions, the DJI (Germany) avoids discussion group activities and instead seeks to involve the parents directly in the type of cultural action which forms the basis of the children's curriculum. Parents have been found to accept this type of involvement fairly readily.

One important consideration in any attempt to use or involve parents is the representativeness of those who respond. In the PSCP all parents obviously respond, but in all other cases the response cannot be so controlled. No data are available at this stage on the selectivity of the co-operating parents but it may well be a crucial variable.

In all the projects some training is made available to the parents. In the cases of the GEON and Västmanland project this involves simply the transition of information. In the former some attempt has been made specifically to encourage the parents least likely to respond. In the Västmanland project, an initial attempt was made to have the school psychologists now meet with teachers and the teachers, in turn, meet with the parents.

In the PSCP, some of the correspondence materials are directed specifically at the parents to provide training for them. In PDC parent classes have been organised. In some sites these have been offered as special parent sessions whereas in others the parents have simply been included in the regular training sessions for teachers and administrators.

In the DJI project the parents' involvement and learning has been directly achieved through their involvement in cultural action. The teachers have been trained in ways to facilitate parent involvement since the process of involvement is believed itself to provide the best training for the parents.

We shall draw again on the descriptive material concerning these five projects when considering the next issue, that of the child's transition from pre-primary provisions to the compulsory school system.

The transition problem - This topic clearly has the status of an 'issue' in those countries where explicit provision is already made, or is envisaged, for 'pre-school' classes and especially where this brings into question the desirability of lowering the age of compulsory schooling. But in many other countries interest has been developing from the point of view of the child who has become familiar with the characteristic 'climate' of the kindergarten. Such children may find an abrupt change on entry to primary school discouraging or in some cases emotionally disturbing. Educationists from countries with a compulsory school age of 7 years have naturally been interested in the 'infant class' methods characteristic of the first two years from 5 to 7 in the British primary-school structure.

Nearly half the local education authorities in England have introduced in some of their schools the three-tier system of 'first', 'middle' and 'higher' sections. The 'first school', starting at 5, runs to 8, 9 or 10 years - the 5-9 pattern being the most favoured. The second section lasts four years (to 12, 13 or 14) and the third then carries the child through to the end of compulsory schooling (at 16) or beyond.

In Sweden the national boards of education and of social welfare have both separately and jointly carried out research and development work on problems of collaboration between primary schools and the ECCE system; and the Danish Minister of Education has recently set up a working party on the 5-8 age-group. The Netherlands has at present a Ministerial Committee on a proposed 'first school' system over the age-range 4-12 years, leaving the age of compulsory schooling at 6 years. Twenty schools are currently involved in an 'action experiment' under the aegis of this committee, and other schools are acting informally on their own initiative, stimulated and supported by the network of 'teachers' centres'. The proposed system would not simply bring the kindergartens and the primary schools together, but would rather develop a new kind of school. A draft law is likely to be laid before the Dutch Parliament during 1976: if it is passed there will be

a set date for initiating the new system and a plan for its implementation over a period of years.

Drawing again on the CERI five-projects programme, we can note that Project Developmental Continuity (USA) includes an evaluation of two alternative models for the transition between Headstart and the primary system. One requires the local school board to establish means for ensuring interaction and promoting cooperation between the administrators, staff and parents of the Headstart school or schools and those of the primary school to which the children will probably go; the other involves a new 'first school' (to include the Headstart programme at the lower end). Evaluation has been entrusted to independent agencies under contract from the Office of Child Development.

In the Västmanland (Sweden) project, only the organisational arrangement of linkages has been used but it has been found possible to establish organisational co-operation between teachers from the two types of schools. The major thrust of the project is not just to get interaction between pre-school and primary teachers organised, but to encourage methodological co-operation. That is, to bring the teachers from the two traditions to the point where they recognise and examine the methodological differences and set about reducing the discontinuity experienced by children as they move from pre-school to primary school. This type of methodological co-operation is seen as a necessary prelude to any formal integration.

The options

Demand and supply - The options on the demand side are inevitably a function of the prevailing social and political philosophy, but it would be wise to assume that demand for ECCE provisions will continue to rise in all Member countries unless some means is found to control it. The principal demand source lies in the actual behaviour of women who are the mothers of children in the ECCE age-range: more and more of them are breaking away from the traditional 'stay at home' pattern. As was noted in the early pages of this report, there are three main strands in their motivation - 'pull' from the employment market; 'need', whether objective or not, for increased income; and a desire for greater equality of freedom and opportunity, both relative to men and in absolute terms. The first two of these are obviously susceptible, in theory, to control by economic means which take the form of various suggested 'inducements to stay at home'. Limited experience so far suggests the hypothesis that these may have the desired effect during the first year after the birth of a child, and a diminishing effect thereafter. But there are obviously some options available to policy makers and these can be tested empirically. In some countries a falling birth-rate may of course reduce demand levels.

The third strand does not prima facie seem very open to demand control, since it is not readily accessible to counter-motivation. If

women, now given the choice, wish both to have children and to be free to do other things with their time as well as nurture them, they will do so. We have abundant evidence of this - including the facts about large-scale 'child-minding' of very variable quality. In the United Kingdom at least, attempts to achieve control through registration of child-minders by local municipalities, have frequently 'driven the business underground', and conservative estimates suggest that upwards of 150,000 under-fives are daily in the custody of unregistered child-minders, sometimes in deplorable conditions.

However much the existence and spread of this freedom-seeking attitude among women may be deplored by experts or by their fellow-citizens, male or female, the demand it causes could only be controlled by some action to modify the attitude itself. For example, a reduction in demand for full-day ECCE services might result from a substantial increase in the availability of part-time employment; and a similar reduction might be achieved if the working hours and conditions of employment of fathers and mothers could be made closely comparable. More and more men, at least in some countries, are becoming prepared to share the domestic ECCE role but are prevented by the traditional rigidities of their working hours and conditions of employment.

If against this background of limited options on the demand side we turn to consider supply, the first point to make is that the use of public funds for this purpose must in any stable economy have a limit. Where this limit is set is of course a matter of priorities in relation to other demands, and the priority accorded to ECCE provisions will in any country vary from time to time as a complex function of a number of variables. One of these, as cannot too often be said, is the prevailing social and political philosophy; and another is the available and politically-convincing evidence of popular unsatisfied demand. An obvious third is the economic circumstances and their effect on both public expenditure and the level of employment.

The necessity for assuming an economic limit on public funding of ECCE provisions suggests that the answer to the question "universal or not?" is in the negative - certainly if 'universal' implies, as in all seriousness it sometimes does, 'full-day care from birth onwards for the children of all mothers who ask for it". The supply questions then become 1) how much? 2) of what? 3) to whom? and 4) how should it be delivered?

It is probably as well to take the first two questions together, since as we have seen quantity is a function of quality when expenditure is limited. The options facing the policy-makers are then heavily influenced by decisions on minimum acceptable quality. Despite the high cost of special-purpose buildings, good quality in construction and equipment can be expected to lengthen the period over which the original capital input can be amortized. The greater problems lie on the running-expenditure side, particularly when no vanishing point can be envisaged for inflationary effects. This directs attention to the cost

of staffing, generally accepted as accounting for 75-80 per cent of total operational costs in ECCE services. At this point questions of staffing ratios and of professional standards cease abruptly to be 'academic', and policy-makers turn for advice to their expert advisers. As things stand at present these are likely to respond in terms of a consensus judgement based more on experience and intuition than on adequate scientific evidence. Both the policy-makers and their advisers are wide open to the spokesmen of unsatisfied demand who can point to this lack of objective evidence for staffing standards. To this the only answer - by the very nature of the problem mainly a long-term one - must be found in official support of well-designed and executed research of a kind not so far possible.

There is, however, another aspect to the question 'of what?" : this is the variety in the mixture of services made available. Here the options are relatively wide, and the choice of mixture should be made as close to the demand source as is consistent with a coherent national or regional policy and rational control of expenditure. In some localities it may be both possible and desirable to provide a high proportion of the ECCE services through well-planned support of voluntary effort, whereas in others - especially those that are heavily-industrialized - the need for publicly-operated institutional and family-based day-care services may predominate.

'To whom' is again a question of social philosophy to which we have seen a variety of answers across countries. There are however some general trends which suggest some limitation of current options. In many countries there is evidence of hesitation to increase public funding of ECCE services for the very young children, from birth to 2 or 3 years of age. How far this is based on expert advice is unknown, but this negative exercise of option may prove to be well-founded if our evidence for the importance of 1 . 1 adult to child ratios continues to build up.

The other general trend represents, in one form or another, the concept of 'positive discrimination' of which the 'weak' form is the meeting of obvious need - as in the case of full-day care for the young children of single parents obliged to earn a living. Apart from the equally clear needs of mentally and physically handicapped children, who it is increasingly realised can and should be included in standard ECCE services and integrated with normal children, the 'stronger' form of positive discrimination involves problems of need identification. The options here are between area-based and family-based criteria of additional or special need. It is probable that both are required except in areas of extreme general economic and social deprivation.

The delivery structure - We must now consider the last of the four 'supply' questions: 'How should the ECCE services be delivered?' which merits a substantial section on its own. Here we consider options which are all in some way or other concerned with questions

of structure, but among which the choice may well depend more on social values than on administrative efficiency. For example, a high-level political decision about ministerial responsibility for ECCE is not simply a question of tidy portfolios, or of budgetary convenience: it is also, and antecedently, a question of social objectives. Is the objective seen as meeting the needs of young children, or of women who are mothers, or of 'the family'? If the last, is it regarded as having a special value in its own right, as the basic unit of 'the community', or as (in one or other of a number of senses) a partner of 'the state' in shaping the next generation? To illustrate the point:

> ..... there can be no doubt that day care is coming to America. The question is: What kind? Shall we follow the pattern of certain other nations in which day-care programs have served further to separate the child from his family, and reduce the family's and the community's feelings of responsibility for their children? Or, shall the American model of day-care retain and rededicate our commitment to the family as the primary and proper agent for the process of making human beings human? The answer to these questions depends on the extent to which day-care programs are so located and so organised as to encourage rather than to discourage the involvement of parents in the development and operation of the day-care program both in the centre and in the home.
> ..... With the breakdown of community, neighbourhood and the extended family, an increasingly greater responsibility for the care and upbringing of children has fallen on the young mother. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that many young women in America are in the process of revolt. I for one understand and share their sense of rage, but I fear the consequences of the solutions they advocate, which will have the effect of isolating children still further from the kind of care and attention they need. There is, of course, a constructive implication to this line of thought: namely, a major route to the rehabilitation of children and youth in American society lies in the enhancement of the status and power of women in all walks of life - both on the job and in the home. As I read the research literature, the ideal arrangement for the development of the young child is one in which his mother works part-time; for only in this way can she be the full person that being an effective parent requires. *

There is without doubt a growing awareness that a 'child-centred' philosophy is simplistic: a 'women-centred' philosophy is neither what equality is about nor necessarily in the best interests of children; and that 'communities' do not in any real sense exist except in terms of

* Bronfenbrenner, Urie. Statement to the Sub-committee on Children and Youth of the United States Senate. Washington, 26th April, 1971.

interaction between the human units living in close geographical proximity. For probably very fundamental reasons, the care and education of young children is universally observed as an important means for ensuring that interaction.

In terms of some such considerations as these one can, and perhaps should, approach the question of options in delivery-structure models from the bottom upwards, rather than from a governmental level downwards as is usual. From this perspective, administratively-independent services providing separately for the health, welfare, care and education of young children simply do not seem likely to be fully utilised or fully effective. Neither does a dual system of ECCE provision, whether it is wholly age-related or based on whether the provision is full-time or part-time. It is now recognised as notoriously difficult to achieve close co-operation even at very local level between administratively-independent services, and also that remarkably little advance may be gained by putting responsibility for such services in the same ministerial portfolio.

The alternative structural options lie therefore in a variety of integrated or closely co-ordinated models. At the national level, but with clear provision for involvement of the local communities in both budgetary planning and in decision-making about the services required, we have the example provided by the 1973 Child Care Act in Finland. Also at national level but within the potentially severe constitutional and political constraints of a federal structure, there is the Children's Commission in Australia, formed as recently as 1975. Within a federal structure where responsibility of all kinds for ECCE is fully devolved to the constituent provinces, there is the model afforded by the Directorate of Early Childhood Services under a cabinet committee of the government of Alberta in Canada, set up in 1973. Even within the dual system of the United Kindgom there are several centrally-supported experiments at local authority level in the unified provision of full-day care and sessional nursery school facilities. * And the idea of 'Children's Centres' or 'Family Centres' is under trial, among other widely-scattered places, in West Berlin, France and London.

Conclusion

It has been said that "public expenditure is the stuff of politics", and this is increasingly relevant to the decision-making required for the field of early childhood care and education. Economic trends that set limits on expansion provide powerful incentives to examine both quantity and quality, and the relation between both of them and identifiable social needs. But in times of rapid and accelerating changes in

* "Glossop Centre goes all-out for integration", in Pre-school Progress, a supplement to Education, 22nd November, 1974.

social values it becomes increasingly difficult to carry out that identification, to distinguish 'needs' from demand which will often expand indefinitely to consume supply.

The approach adopted in preparing this report has recognised the impossibility of producing a set of 'need' definitions that could be applied with equal validity in Member countries of the OECD. Each country must decide its own in terms of its own perception of what social objectives early childhood care and education should serve. We have however noted a surprisingly related recognition, across international differences, that there should be a fundamentally complementary relationship between care and education provided in the home and provided institutionally - in a wide variety of ways - by the community or state. The living link in that complementary relationship is the parents: and it now seems likely that the choice of options available to those responsible for the formation of ECCE policy will be widened to the extent that this is taken fully into account. So far as economy and efficiency are concerned, this principle is consistent with the concept of fully integrated planning and provision of all the public services supportive of young children and their parents, as members of living communities.

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